RURAL WALKS:

IN

DIALOGUES.

INTENDED

FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PERSONS.

By CHARLOTTE SMITH.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

DUBLIN:

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PREFACE.

SO numerous and ſo excellent are the books which have been written for the uſe of Children and Young Perſons, within a very few years, that, on the great duties of life, nothing can, perhaps, be added, which is either new, or which can be addreſſed to them in any new form.

In this little Work, therefore, I have confined myſelf rather to what are called *les petites morales*. To repreſs diſcontent; to inculcate the neceſſity of ſubmitting cheerfully to ſuch ſituations as fortune may throw them into; to check that flippancy of remark, ſo frequently diſguſting in girls of twelve or thirteen; and to correct the errors

errors that young people often fall into in converſation, as well as to give them a taſte for the pure pleaſures of retirement, and the ſublime beauties of Nature; has been my intention.

In the very little time that the inceſſant neceſſity of writing for the ſupport of my family allows me to beſtow on the education of a girl between twelve and thirteen, I have found, notwithſtanding the number of excellent books, that ſomething of this kind was ſtill wanting. I wiſhed to unite the intereſt of the novel with the inſtruction of the ſchool-book, by throwing the latter into the form of dialogue, mingled with narrative, and by giving ſome degree of character to the group. To do this, however, I have found it leſs eaſy than I imagined. It ſeems to be the peculiar felicity of the author of L'Ami des Enfans to have written ſtories which are attractive

to

to children, yet not unintereſting to others farther advanced in life. In general, ſuch works muſt appear inſipid to all but thoſe for whom they are immediately deſigned, and ſhould not therefore be judged of, as they frequently are, by perſons who ſeem not ſufficiently to conſider that ſuch books were not meant for their entertainment, but for the inſtruction of the riſing generation.

That there are but few poets whoſe works can be put indiſcriminately into the hands of very young people, the extracts which are daily offered for their uſe muſt fully evince. Indeed, I know none but Gray and Collins which are wholly unexceptionable; and ſublime as *their* poetry is, not many of their compoſitions can be reliſhed by readers but juſt emerging from childhood.

In

In cloſing each of the following ſhort Dialogues with ſome lines of poetry, I have endeavoured to ſelect pieces likely to encourage a taſte for ſimple compoſition; and if I have indulged the vanity or the fondneſs of an author, by inſerting two or three of my own, I have done ſo rather to gratify ſome young friends, than becauſe I ſuppoſe them better than others. A copy of verſes in the eighth Dialogue is the production of a beloved and regretted friend, which I was glad of an opportunity to reſcue from the injury they had received, by mutilated copies in manuſcript.

Nov. 19, 1794.

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

CONTENTS.

Page.

INTRODUCTION, - - - 1

DIALOGUE I.

The Sick Cottager, - - 8

DIALOGUE II.

The Dormouſe, - - - 24

DIALOGUE III.

The Ruined Monaſtery, - - 47

DIALOGUE IV.

The Nightingale's Neſt, - - 73

DIALOGUE V.

The Lily of the Valley, - - 95

DIALOGUE VI.

Miſs Harley, - - - 119

DIALOGUE VII.

The Strawberry Girls, - - 145

DIALOGUE VIII.

Fanny Benniſon, - - - 175

DIALOGUE

CONTENTS.

DIALOGUE IX.

	Page.
The Fiſhermen, - -	199

DIALOGUE X.

The Viſit, - - -	226

DIALOGUE XI.

The Alarm, - - -	257

DIALOGUE XII.

The Family aſſembled, - -	279

INTRODUCTION.

AT the diſtance of ſixty miles from London, and in a ſmall country town, or rather a large village, Mrs. Woodfield had choſen the retirement which her circumſtances rendered neceſſary.

Born in proſperity, and educated in all thoſe accompliſhments which are cultivated to adorn ſociety; having paſſed five and thirty years of her life in the ſplendors and enjoyments of affluence, a ſudden reverſe in the fortune of her huſband, whoſe death, occaſioned by diſquiet and mortification, ſoon followed, reduced her to the neceſſity of retiring from the world.

Her ſons, (except the two youngeſt, who were yet children) had left her, to enter on the profeſſions for which they were deſigned; but ſhe had two daughters, one of thirteen, and the other of eleven years old.

To educate theſe children, ſo as to render them happy in that rank of life to which it now ſeemed to be their deſtiny to belong, was the great object of her life. The eldeſt was of an age to remember their former manner of life, though not of a diſpoſition to remember it with regret; but the youngeſt had, in the ſimplicity of infancy, neither recollection of their paſt, nor concern for their preſent ſituation.

But in addition to the cares of Mrs. Woodfield on account of her own children, were thoſe ſhe had aſſumed on behalf of Caroline Cecil, the daughter of her brother, an officer, who was abroad in the ſervice of his country. His wife, a diſſipated woman, related to nobility, was lately dead, and had left her daughter, who

who was a few months older than Elizabeth Woodfield, in a ſituation ſo friendleſs and deſolate, as induced Mrs. Woodfield to take her immediately under her protection, though ſhe was well aware, that the manner in which ſhe had been brought up hitherto, had given her notions ſo different from thoſe in which Mrs. Woodfield wiſhed to educate her own daughters, that it could hardly fail to interfere with her preſent ſcheme of life.

In proportion as the character of Caroline Cecil became more known to her, ſhe was more perſuaded of the difficulty that would attend the taſk ſhe had undertaken. But the affection ſhe had for her brother, and the reſentment ſhe felt for the cruelty of her niece's other relations (who refuſed to take the leaſt notice of her, orphan and deſolate as ſhe was) determined Mrs. Woodfield, who had an excellent heart, to redouble her vigilance, rather than ſuffer the unfortunate Caroline Cecil to be conſigned to ſtrangers, to whom her welfare muſt be indifferent.

From an houſe in the neighbourhood of Berkley-Square, much larger than Colonel Cecil's fortune could with prudence allow him to inhabit; from paſſing the ſummer at public bathing-places, and the winter in a continual round of company; Caroline Cecil entered, with a degree of affright and amazement, on a manner of life very different from that to which ſhe had been accuſtomed.

It was the end of December when Mrs. Woodfield ſent her ſervant to London, to attend her niece to her habitation. The road was every where tedious, from the badneſs of the weather; and that part of it which led acroſs the country from the county town, was rough, and, in the imagination of Caroline, who had never travelled but upon the turnpike roads that lead from London to places of great reſort, it was ſo dangerous, that ſhe expected to be overturned every moment. Her companion was a blunt uneducated country-woman, who had nothing but honeſty to recommend

recommend her, and who had no idea of the ſenſations of her fellow-traveller, but contented herſelf with remarking, that "it was a pity Miſs was ſo dull;"—an obſervation that did not much contribute to make her otherwiſe.

Wind and rain, the darkneſs of a December night, and the fatigue and fear occaſioned by plunging through roads of clay and mud, gave to the countenance of Caroline Cecil ſo much dejection, that Mrs. Woodfield was ſtruck with concern and amazement when ſhe entered the room, where her aunt and her couſins had expected her the whole evening.

It was three years ſince they had laſt met; and ſince that period, Miſs Cecil had been abroad with her mother, had been introduced into a great deal of company, and was ſo changed, that only the likeneſs ſhe bore to her father gave to Mrs. Woodfield the idea of its being the ſame perſon whom ſhe had ſeen three years before.

before. She was dreſſed, though in deep mourning, in the extremity of faſhion; and, amidſt her dejection, there was an air of haughty ſuperiority, mingled with ſomething of concealed diſdain, as ſhe caſt her eyes round the room, which, though neat, was ſmall, and furniſhed with great ſimplicity. Mrs. Woodfield, as ſhe made theſe remarks on her niece, felt all the poſſible inconvenience of the engagement ſhe had entered into; but when ſhe again traced, in the countenance of Miſs Cecil, her ſtrong reſemblance to her brother, ſhe was ſenſible of all that compaſſion an dtenderneſs for her niece, which might enable her to fulfil the taſk ſhe had undertaken.

Elizabeth and Henrietta Woodfield received their couſin with the ingenuous warmth of their age; delighted with having another companion; and, without the leaſt tincture of jealouſy in their tempers, they conſidered her arrival as one of the moſt agreeable events of their lives. Far from ſuppoſing that their couſin thought

thought of her future abode with them as of a ſpecies of baniſhment from human ſociety, they imputed her melancholy to the recent loſs of her mother, and the abſence and danger of her father and brothers.

After an early and ſimple ſupper, Mrs. Woodfield, attended by her two daughters, conducted their viſitor to the apartment that had been prepared for her. It was ſtill more plain than the room they had left. A field-bed, with white cotton curtains, two or three painted chairs, a Scotch carpet, a table for her glaſs, and a cheſt of wainſcot drawers, compoſed the whole of the furniture; but over the latter there were ſome ſhelves, where Mrs. Woodfield told her ſhe ſhould have her books placed, as ſoon as they could be unpacked. "I have but very few, Madam," anſwered Caroline, ſighing. "Well, my love," replied her aunt, "perhaps I ſhall find means to increaſe your collection; but of thoſe arrangements we will talk to-morrow: it is now time that you take ſome repoſe after the fatigue of your journey."

DIALOGUE I.

THE SICK COTTAGER.

[CAROLINE CECIL, going to the Window of her Bedchamber.]

Caroline.

OH! merciful Heaven, what a dreary place!—Good God! what will become of me!—To be buried alive in ſuch a place as this! A wide wide common, with nothing in ſight but thoſe miſerable cottages yonder, or a few clumps of mournful fir trees!—Heigh ho!—This time laſt year I was at Bath with mamma.

[ELIZABETH and HENRIETTA WOODFIELD enter the room.]

(Both ſpeak.) My dear couſin!—my dear Caroline!—are you ready for breakfaſt?

Caroline

Caroline (ſighing). Yes; quite ready, Miſs Woodfield.

Elizabeth. Miſs Woodfield!—Ah! how formal that is; but I am afraid you have not ſlept, Caroline—your eyes ſeem inflamed.

Caroline (dejectedly). No; it is only the cold wind yeſterday that has affected them; and the wind in the country is ſo much ſharper than I have been uſed to. I fancy it is very bleak here in the winter.—But had we not better go down? Mrs. Woodfield, I remember, told me ſhe breakfaſted early.

Henrietta. You cannot imagine, couſin, how we long to hear you play on the piano forté. Mamma has had it tuned on purpoſe for you; for, as it was of no uſe to either of us, becauſe we do not play now, it was got quite out of order.

Caroline (coldly). I cannot play worth any one's hearing.

Henrietta. I am ſo fond of muſic!—dear couſin, I hope you will play to us.

Caroline (ſtill more coldly.) I am only ſorry I cannot play well enough to amuſe you.

[They go down.]

The breakfaſt paſſes with little converſation. Mrs. Woodfield makes tender enquiries after her niece's health. Caroline appears cold and dejected.

Mrs. Woodfield. And now, Caroline, will you remain in the houſe, or go with Elizebeth and me to viſit a poor family, who are in a ſituation to want even the little aſſiſtance we can give them?

Caroline. I will go, if you pleaſe, Madam.

A froſt,

A froſt, which followed the heavy rain of the preceding evening, made the ſhort walk they now undertook leſs diſguſting to the delicacy of Caroline, who dreaded the dirt, and ſtill trembled at the cold they muſt encounter in croſſing the common; but any thing was to her leſs irkſome than being alone, and ſhe determined, ſince it was her hard fate to be ſhut up in the dreary ſolitude of the country, to accuſtom herſelf to go out as well as ſhe could. The diſcontent that hung upon her features did not eſcape the obſervation of her aunt, who was glad of this opportunity of ſhewing her whet real miſery was, and checking that diſpoſition to repine, which makes ſo much of the artificial calamity of life.

They entered a cottage, of which the mud walls were in many places falling down, the thatch broken, and the windows darkened by paper and rags, that were ſtuffed between the broken panes. Over a few embers, which the green ſticks that were laid upon them could not make

aſpired

aſpire to a flame, ſat a Cottager, whoſe pale ſqualid countenance, and emaciated figure, preſented too ſtrong an image of diſeaſe and famine. He was wrapped in a tattered great coat, and hung cowering over the fire with a child upon his knee, which he appeared hardly to have ſtrength to ſupport, and to whom he had given a piece of bread, which he ſeemed equally unwilling and unable to ſhare with it. His wife, with ſtifled anguiſh in her countenance, was preparing, as ſhe ſtood at a table, a mixture of ſomething that was to ſerve as food for the family, while three children, the eldeſt not ſix years of age, ſtood watching till it ſhould be ready for them, with the impatient eagerneſs of hunger. Oppoſite to the unhappy father, on the other ſide of the fire, was a cradle, with an infant in it only a few weeks old.

On the entrance of Mrs. Woodfield and her family, a ray of joy ſeemed to illumine the eyes of the poor woman.

" Ah!

"Ah! madam," ſaid ſhe, "how good it is in you to come again!—But, bleſs me! what a place for you and the young ladies to come into!"

Mrs. Woodfield. Never mind the place—How is your huſband?—Come, go on with what you are about.

Poor Woman. Dear Madam, if it had not been for you, I verily believe he would not have been alive. For, Ma'am, it was to no purpoſe I went to farmer Denns; he was quite in a rage when I aſked for ſome little matter more of help, and bid me I ſhould go again to the juſtices next Saturday at Bench, and ſee if they'd make a new order, to help us to live in idleneſs another month.

The poor Man (ſighing, and in a tremulous voice). As if it was my deſire to remain idle! and to ſee my children ſtarve around me! I who, till I got this fever and ague laſt barley harveſt, never have left

left work one day ſince I was married, now ſeven years come May.

Poor Woman (half crying). I do think it cruel hard, Madam; for nobody in the pariſh can ſay that we ever were troubleſome, even in the hardeſt times. But all goes by favour in our pariſh! Hows'ever, Ma'am, my poor huſband, thank God, is not worſe this morning; and the wine whey you ſent him did him more good than the doctor's ſtuff.

Mrs. Woodfield then proceeded to inquire into the man's complaints; and, promiſing them farther relief from her kitchen, ſhe put half-a-crown into the woman's hand, and left the houſe.

Elizabeth and Henrietta ſhewed by their countenances, as well as by the queſtions they aſked their mother, that the ſituation of the poor family had affected them; but their couſin continued ſilent, till Mrs. Woodfield ſpoke to her.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. Well, Caroline, what do you think of the ſcene we have juſt witneſſed? Are not ſickneſs and poverty real evils? And do not ſuch ſpectacles teach us the wickedneſs and folly of that diſcontent we are ſo apt to indulge, if we are not exactly in the place which we prefer, or with the people who amuſe us? Tell me, my dear, have you been uſed to conſider the ſituation of millions of your fellow-creatures, who are not better ſituated than the poor family we have juſt ſeen?

Caroline. You know, Madam, that we did not live in the country at all when my mamma was alive; and in London one never thinks of the poor people—

Mrs. Woodfield. Though in no place on earth there is ſo much miſery! When we return home my dear Caroline, you ſhall copy for me a few lines from Thomſon, on the ſubject of the thoughtleſſneſs of the affluent and fortunate. I wiſh to teach

teach you to think on ſubjects which, I believe, you have never yet been led to reflect upon; you have a very good underſtanding, and I think you have a good heart.

Caroline. I hope, Madam, I have not a bad heart. I am ſure I wiſh no ill to any body; but in regard to acts of charity, Madam, I ſuppoſe I was too young for mamma to require *me* to give away what we could ſpare.

Mrs. Woodfield. No perſon is too young to be taught to think, my dear Caroline. My daughters are younger than you are; no family, heaven knows, have leſs to give away than we have; but yet I have been fortunate enough to awaken in the hearts of Elizabeth and Henrietta, ſo much reflection, that more than once, when I have offered them ſome little indulgence, they have preferred giving the money it would have coſt, to ſuch diſtreſſed object as happened then to be moſt immediately in their recollection.

collection. Tell me now, which would give you the moſt pleaſure; to be able to relieve the wretched family we have juſt ſeen, or to go to the ball which is to be held, on the 7th of January, in the Town Hall at W——?

At the mention of a ball, all the habits of her former life returned to the recollection of Caroline Cecil; and though a Chriſtmas ball at a provincial town was, ſhe knew, very unlike thoſe ſplendid aſſemblies ſhe had been uſed to frequent, yet it was not without its allurements. She had been told that ſhe was very handſome, very elegant, had a look of faſhion, and ſomething ſuperior in her air and manner; all which ſhe implicitly believed. She knew that ſhe danced particularly well, and in the moſt faſhionable ſtyle;—what an impreſſion then muſt all theſe accompliſhments make on the frequenters of a country aſſembly! how much admiration ſhe ſhould excite! how much praiſe ſhe ſhould hear!—her heart beat high as all this occurred to her; but

ſhe

ſhe knew ſhe muſt check its emotion. After a moment's heſitation, therefore, ſhe anſwered:

Caroline. To be ſure, Madam, I ſhould be very glad, were it in my power, to do good to theſe or any other poor perſons; but I imagine that I am not in my circumſtances, ... in a ſituation to .... to be able to help them to any purpoſe. As to going out, I hope I ſhall never wiſh to go againſt your inclinations. Certainly I am fond of ſociety, and have been uſed to think that young people ſhould be allowed ſome innocent pleaſure; but I am a ſtranger here, and have no thoughts, I am ſure, of aſking you to go to a ball on my account.

Mrs. Woodfield (entering immediately into the thoughts that her niece imagined ſhe concealed). No, my dear; I dare ſay you would not. And I am glad you would not, becauſe I ſhould be ſorry to refuſe you the firſt requeſt you made me. I mentioned

mentioned the ball at W. merely as the only public amuſement within our reach, for I have no intention of going; the weather is too cold, and the expence greater than I can afford. But that is not all. You are in your firſt mourning for your mother; ſhe has not been dead more than ſix weeks; and though faſhionable folks have got above all ſuch forbearance, it will little become a young perſon of very ſmall fortune to emulate ſuch unfeeling careleſſneſs; for, if ever you hope to amend that fortune, it muſt be done by ſhewing that you poſſeſs the virtues of ſenſibility, gratitude, and humility.

Caroline ſighed deeply, but did not reply. Mrs. Woodfield, for the remainder of their ſhort walk, addreſſed her converſation to her own daughters, while her niece again looked round in deſpondence on the dreary ſcene they were paſſing.

A driving

A driving ſleet rendered every object more chill and obſcure; and Caroline, having changed her clothes, attended at the dinner table with a gloomy and diſcontented air. Involuntarily ſhe compared the preſent with the paſt; but in a very different manner from what her aunt had intended by the leſſon of the morning.

Alas! thought ſhe, is it thus my life is to paſs! All the morning in viſiting the miſerable manſions of a parcel of beggars! I am ſure I am not hard-hearted, and would give them halfpence or ſixpence at any time, with all my heart, if I happened to have any ſmall money about me; but to go into ſuch naſty unwholeſome places, and hear of nothing but ſuch diſmal ſtories! I believe very few young perſons would like that; it is enough to lower their ſpirits, and make mopes of them for the reſt of their lives.

It did not occur to her, that theſe unwholeſome habitations, which ſhe could not

not bear to enter for a few moments, were the perpetual abodes of creatures whoſe feelings and neceſſities were the ſame as her own; and very certainly ſhe did not know, that to inquire into and relieve diſtreſs, was ſo far from having a depreſſing effect on the minds of youth, that never does the heart feel ſo light, never are the enjoyments our own ſituation affords, ſo keenly reliſhed, as when we are conſcious, proudly conſcious, of having done our duty, and of being the means of mitigating the evils incident to humanity.

Theſe ideas, however, which are ſometimes innate, but oftener, perhaps, ariſe from an early habit of reflection, Caroline Cecil had not yet acquired. She ſaw indeed her two couſins gay and cheerful; nor was that cheerfulneſs obſcured by the remarks they made on the ſcene of ſickneſs and ſorrow to which they had that morning been witneſs; on the contrary, they ſeemed to feel pleaſure in

in imagining little projects of their own, for the relief of the younger individuals of this unhappy family. Elizabeth aſked her mamma's leave to cut up a gown ſhe had ceaſed to wear, to make a frock for one of the children; and Henrietta deſired to be permitted to lay out a few ſhillings ſhe had ſaved, in flannel for the other. Their mother readily acquieſced in their plans, without, however, giving to either that ſort of praiſe, as if ſhe thought that in theſe inſtances of humanity they made any extraordinary or unuſual exertion.

Mrs. Woodfield, however, obſerved with concern, that this firſt leſſon of humility and charity had failed in regard to her niece, who continued ſilent and almoſt ſullen. In the evening of winter, it was ſometimes her cuſtom to give her daughters a ſhort leſſon from ſome favourite author, as an exerciſe of nice writing: That ſhe choſe for this evening, was from Thomſon:

" Ah!

" Ah! little think the gay licentious proud,
" Whom pleaſure, power, and affluence ſurround,
" They, who their thoughtleſs hours in giddy
" mirth
" And wanton, often cruel riot waſte;"
" Ah! little think they, while they dance along,
" How many feel, this very moment, death,
" And all the ſad variety of pain;
" How many ſink in the devouring flood,
" Or more devouring flame; how many bleed
" By ſhameful variance between man and
" man;
" How many pine in want, and dungeon glooms,
" Shut from the common air, and common uſe
" Of their own limbs; how many drink the cup
" Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread
" Of miſery: Sore pierced by wintry winds,
" How many ſhrink into the ſordid hut
" Of cheerleſs poverty!"

DIALOGUE II.

THE DORMOUSE.

SLOWLY and heavily, for Caroline Cecil, paſſed the remainder of the month of January. February was cold and ſtormy, and the prolonged winter hovered over them with even a more gloomy aſpect than it had worn in the froſts of his mid career. The ſnow-drop, however, faintly peeped forth amidſt the tempeſt, and ſome other wintry flowers announced the return of ſpring. The firſt that reared its tender head above the fallen leaves and dead graſs, in a corner of their little ſhrubbery, gave inexpreſſible pleaſure to Henrietta, who every morning paſſed that way to feed ſome favourite poultry, lodged in an adjoining out-houſe. She came in with that ſimple

ſimple innocent joy, ſo pleaſing in early youth to every one, but ſo particularly intereſting to a mother.

[Mrs. WOODFIELD and ELIZABETH were at work—CAROLINE was drawing at a table near the fire.]

Henrietta. Oh! my dear mamma, do you know we have got ſnow-drops in the garden already? there are twenty or thirty that will be quite blown out to-morrow! And there is a pale yellow flower, or rather a greeniſh flower, with a little red about it. Mamma! you will be delighted to ſee them! I wiſh you would come out to look at them.

Mrs. Woodfield. It rains, my love, and I have got a ſad cold; but I will ſee them to-morrow. It is always delightful to mark the firſt approach of ſpring.

Caroline. It ſeems to me, as if there never was any ſpring in the country.

Mrs. Woodfield. Indeed, Miſs Cecil!—The remark is ſo new to me, that, had I

made one on the ſame ſubject, I ſhould have reverſed it, and have ſaid, that it ſeems to me, there is never any ſpring in London.

Caroline (ſighing). Ah! dear Madam, you certainly have forgot the delightful roſes, lillies, and I know not how many charming flowers, for I always forget their names, which one uſed to have from that delightful man in Bond-Street. Mamma uſed to have them ſent her twice a week; and ſhe had ſuch elegant bureaus made of wire, and painted green; our drawing-room uſed to be quite a little paradiſe. And we uſed to have ſuch lovely noſegays of roſes—

Mrs. Woodfield. Roſes! when they were eighteen pence or two ſhillings a piece! Alas! dear Caroline, thoſe luxuries, like many others, are not only totally unfit for perſons of ſmall and precarious fortunes, but, by creating artificial wants, they deſtroy the enjoyment of natural pleaſures. I allow, that nothing is more lovely than an hot-houſe roſe; light, free from inſects, glowing with the ſofteſt

ſofteſt colours, it is perhaps more beautiful than the roſes we gather in the firſt week of June; but, when we have enjoyed theſe forced productions for two or three months, June offers us her roſes in vain; we ſee them in every cottage garden; and their charms are become common and unintereſting. I allow, however, that, to perſons of large independent fortune, this is one of the moſt innocent, and would be to me, were I in that ſituation, one of the greateſt gratifications. But for you, I rather regret your having acquired a notion, that the beauty of ſpring conſiſts in an ornamented drawing room, dreſſed with flowers procured by art, becauſe thoſe you perhaps will never be able to procure; whereas a taſte for the genuine beauties of nature, is at all times, and in all ſeaſons and ſituations, a ſource of the pureſt and moſt innocent delight.

Caroline remained ſilent, and probably unconvinced. A party to Ranelagh, a card meeting, in which five or ſix girls

of her own age could get into a corner and giggle together, or titter round the uniform infipidity of a commerce table, ſhe ſtill thought preferable to all the fine views that ever were beheld. The country, to her, was ſtill a blank, and the people ſhe had hitherto ſeen were all twaddlers and quizzes. She was not, therefore, much delighted, when her aunt thus addreſſed herſelf to Elizabeth:

Mrs. Woodfield. My dear, as my cold may be increaſed, if I venture out this evening, I ſhall ſend you and your couſin to Mrs, Gervais's, to pay my viſit, and apologize for me.

Elizabeth. To be ſure, mamma, if you deſire it, I will go; but—

Mrs. Woodfield. But what?

Elizabeth. Only mamma—that if you did not particularly deſire it . . .

Mrs. Woodfield. What then?

Elizabeth. Why then, Mamma—I ſhould ſay, it was a bore.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. And a twaddle, I dare ſay, and all thoſe other expreſſive words that you have learned of Caroline?

Elizabeth. Nay, my dear mamma, I have heard you ſay very often that Mrs. Gervais was very dull.

Mrs. Woodfield. And are you always to live with people who are very entertaining?

Elizabeth. No, mamma; but that good little woman talks ſo about her pigs and her poultry, and how ſhe makes bacon, and how many apples ſhe had in her orchard, and ſuch ſort of things, that it really tires one to death.

Mrs. Woodfield. Give me leave to inquire, Elizabeth, whether the topics on which you would talk, are not quite as unintereſting to Mrs. Gervais?

Elizabeth. Perhaps they are, mamma; but then I do not inſiſt on talking to Mrs. Gervais.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. Nor does ſhe, I dare ſay, inſiſt upon talking to you.

Elizabeth. Not when you are there, mamma; but when there is only us girls, ſhe always preaches, juſt in the ſame manner; and tells us, that young *Miſſes* ought to know all *them there things;* and that ſhe hopes Miſs Betſy, and Miſs Henny never will be above hearing how to make good houſe-wives. Calling one Miſſes, and Miſs Betſy, and Miſs Henny, is ſo vulgar, and ſo diſagreeable, that it puts one out of patience: And, beſides, if people are wiſe enough to inſtruct others, I wiſh they would learn to do it in good Engliſh.

Mrs. Woodfield. I own, Mrs. Gervais is not elegant, nor even educated; but ſhe has many good qualities, which ought to make you overlook much greater defects. You ſhould conſider too, that when ſhe was a young woman, perſons in the middling claſs of life were not educated with the care they are now; that her life has paſſed in the execution of uſeful

uſeful duties, which have left her no time to cultivate her mind; and that it is not wonderful, that thoſe duties, and occupations are, in her opinion, the only proper purſuits; ſince ſhe has, for ſo many years, had no other objects before her eyes. I am ſure, you would laugh more at Mrs. Gervais, if you heard her deſcant on new faſhions, or talk fine on any of the ſubjects of converſation, that are quite out of her way.

Elizabeth. That I ſhould, perhaps. But then, mamma, you muſt allow, that ſhe would be a vaſt deal more entertaining, for then ſhe would make me laugh, and now ſhe makes me yawn.

Mrs. Woodfield. Yawn, if you will, but do not let her ſee it. We cannot always enjoy the converſation we would chuſe, any more than we can always, in travelling, paſs through a beautiful and pleaſant country. We muſt ſometimes go up heavy ſandy hills, ſometimes over dreary flat commons; but it would be a misfortune, if our taſte was ſo very refined

fined and faſtidious as to make us really uneaſy unleſs we were always in ſight of green meadows, purling rivulets, and beautiful woods. And it will be certainly counteracting, my child, the purpoſes of your education, which is to make you reaſonable and happy, if, inſtead of teaching you to paſs over the ſlight faults of others, or to profit by them in mending your own, you learned to be vain of the very little you know, (which every well educated girl knows as well, and ſome better than you do,) and to deſpiſe and fly from every one who may not have had equal advantages. Believe me, my Elizabeth, I have ſeen, and very lately too, ſome very fine ladies, people in ſuperior life, who ſpeak even worſe Engliſh than poor Mrs. Gervais, and will talk of their card adventures, or ſcandalize their acquaintance, with violations of grammar, greatly more offenſive than what our notable neighbour is ſubject to: And I have ſeen ſuch billets as, I am ſure, are worſe, both in ſpelling and ſtyle, than thoſe receipts which I once

once employed you to copy from the hereditary repoſitory of Mrs. Gervais. Go, therefore, Elizabeth, this afternoon. You, Caroline, will go alſo. Henrietta ſhall remain at home with me.

In purſuance of this arrangement, the young people went on their viſit to the wife of the curate of the village. The next morning, while Mrs. Woodfield was adjuſting ſome books in a little room behind that where ſhe uſually breakfaſted with her family, ſhe heard the following dialogue between Caroline and Elizabeth:

Caroline. Well, coulin, have you recovered from the lectures of laſt night; or from the ſight of Miſs Jane Gervais, in her faſhionable riding-habit, hat, and feather?

Elizabeth (laughing). Did any mortal ever ſee ſuch a ridiculous figure? I am ſure ſhe had iron ſtays on under that pompadour armour. And then her hat! and her feathers! and her hair ſo frizzled,

like her father's wig, and powdered ſo white, that I really thought at firſt the old man had lent her his beſt caxon, and that ſhe had put it on hind-ſide before, that it might become her amiable little ſtraw-coloured viſage the better.

Caroline. But the beauty of it all is, that this odd looking little Dutch toy (for ſhe is juſt like a wooden woman that one ſees in a toy-ſhop) fancies herſelf ſo much the thing, that one is ready to die with laughing.

Mrs. Woodfield (entering). You ſee, therefore, I hope, the abſurdity of pretenſions to what one cannot reach. This poor Jane Gervais has ſeen fine ladies dreſſed in feathers, and, not conſidering how very ill the reſt of her habiliments ſuit with ſuch an ornament, how much better ſimplicity and neatneſs accord with humble fortune, than ſhew and finery, ſhe has loaded her head with old feathers, and expoſed her want of judgment. You would have ſeen nothing ridiculous, Miſs Cecil, if this luckleſs object of your ſatire

ſatire had been clad in a linen gown and muſlin linen.

Caroline (confuſedly). No Madam; but if you had ſeen her——

Mrs. Woodfield. If I had ſeen her, ſhe would have appeared an object rather of concern than ridicule. I ſhould have been very ſorry for her; and ſhould have tried gently to have hinted to her, that ſhe made herſelf an object not of admiration, as ſhe intended, but of pity and ridicule.

Elizabeth. And indeed, mamma, if you had, ſhe would only have hated you; for, I am ſure, ſhe would not have believed you. You have no notion how conceited ſhe is, and how her mother encourages her in it; by ſaying that Jane has been here, Jane has been there, and ſeen ſuch and ſuch ladies; and Jane had her hair dreſſed by ſuch a man at Saliſbury, who dreſſes all the *quality*.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. This affectation then of elegance, is ten times worſe, Caroline, than the humbler pretenſions of her mother; is it not?

Caroline. A thouſand times worſe.

Mrs. Woodfield. And yet, perhaps it has never ſtruck you, that there are people, in very ſuperior life, to whom *your* pretenſions to elegance and refinement may appear to be efforts, as impotent and abſurd, as thoſe of Miſs Jane, to be fine and faſhionable, appear to you.

Caroline. I know, aunt, that I *am* to be mortified.

Mrs. Woodfield. Not at all, my dear Caroline. I am ſorry to ſee that which, you know, the French call *l'eſprit mordant, cauſtique**, predominate ſo much, both in you and in Elizabeth; and, before you acquire an habit of indulging it too much, remember, that you may not

* Biting, acrimonious.

always

always be exempt from feeling its ſting from others. This recollection will immediately bring you back to the firſt principle of all good, of all moral rectitude: "Do, as you would others ſhould do unto you." Or, to refer you to that moſt ſimply ſublime of all compoſitions the prayer taught you by Jeſus Chriſt, "You ſhall learn to beg that you may be forgiven your treſpaſſes, even as you forgive thoſe who treſpaſs againſt you." But, perhaps, I take this matter too ſeriouſly. Come, my loves, put on your hats and cloaks: The morning is fine; as ſoon as breakfaſt is over, we will go and take a long walk.

This walk was through the garden, into a wood or coppice beyond it. In paſſing through it, Henrietta carried her mother to look at the ſnow-drops, with which ſhe had been ſo pleaſed the day before.

Henrietta. Oh, mamma! ſee how they are blown out, and how pretty they are!

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. They are very elegant, and are elegantly deſcribed in a couplet of Mrs. Barbauld's:

"As Flora's breath, by ſome transforming power,
"Had changed an icicle into a flower."

Henrietta. And ſee, mamma, this beautiful flower in green, and unlike every other flower!

Mrs. Woodfield. I do not think it ſo beautiful; but every flower, at its firſt appearance, is pretty and intereſting. This is the black hellebore, or what is commonly called the winter roſe. We ſhall, I dare ſay, obſerve, that many of the wild flowers are unfolding on the ſheltered banks, which have hitherto been checked by the ſeverity of the weather.

Henrietta. Mamma! do you know, that, in my garden, there is a plant coming out, full of deep red bloſſoms; there are even one or two little flowers blown, and they ſmell delightfully.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is the mezerian; and is of the ſame ſpecies of plant as that beautiful Daphné Cneorum, or garland Daphné, which we all knelt down to ſmell to, when we ſaw it in Mr. Bridport's garden.

Henrietta. So it is, mamma; I declare now I recollect they are very much alike. Oh! how delightfully every thing begins to ſpring in the hedges! Here are golden cups!

Mrs. Woodfield. No; it is the Pilewort. If you obſerve the leaves, they are more pointed than thoſe of the flower you call a golden cup, which is, in fact, a ranunculus. But to whom are your couſin and your ſiſter talking ſo earneſtly?

Mrs. Woodfield (approaching, and ſpeaking, to the labourer with whom they were in converſation). Well, Maſter Anderſon, how are you? you ſeem much recovered.

Labourer. Thank you kindly, Ma'am; I be a power better, and able to go about my work quite bravely. I made bold,

bold, Madam, to bring the young Miſſes a ſleeper * I have found; I thought how, mayhaps, they'd like to keep un in a box.

Caroline. It is a little beaſt that ſeems to be half dead, for it does but juſt move.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is a dormouſe; one of thoſe creatures that become torpid in winter.

Henrietta. Torpid? Mamma, what is that?

Elizabeth. Dear child! don't you know what torpid is?

Mrs. Woodfield. Are you ſure, Elizabeth, that you know yourſelf?

Elizabeth (conceitedly). To be ſure I do.

Mrs. Woodfield. Explain it then to your ſiſter.

* Dormouſe, ſo called by the peaſants.

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth. Torpid, is heavy, ſleepy, ſtupid, not able to move in cold weather.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is all thoſe; but, in this inſtance, it means more. There are animals for whom nature ſeems to have made, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, a proviſion of inſenſibility. In winter, their juices ſtagnate; they ſleep till the warm weather returns, and brings with it what are for them the neceſſaries of life. The dormouſe has the credit of making a little proviſion againſt the contingency of a warm day, which might awaken him before nature had provided for his ſupport. The ſquirrel, a more lively and ſenſible creature, certainly has *his* proviſion of nuts, acorns, the ſeeds of the pine tree, beech nuts, and what elſe he can get.

Henrietta. The ſquirrel is not torpid, mamma, in winter?

Mrs. Woodfield. Not entirely ſo, I believe; but he is by no means ſo active and alert as in ſummer. He betakes himſelf

ſelf to ſome ſnug hole in an hollow tree, where, on dead leaves and moſs, he ſleeps great part of his time, now and then making a little ſortie on a fine day, and nibbling a little of his ſtore. But come, take the dormouſe; and here Maſter Anderſon, is a ſhilling for you. Elizabeth, do you chuſe to have this poor little animal? I do not aſk *you*, Caroline, becauſe I know you have rather a diſlike to ſuch things.

Elizabeth. My couſin, I am ſure, won't have it: Nor I don't know that I like it much; it ſeems to me to be ſuch a ſtupid little thing, with its eyes half open.

Mrs. Woodfield. Well then, Henrietta, it will fall to your ſhare.

Henrietta (delighted). Oh! you ſweet, little, ſoft, innocent thing! I will take all ſort of care of you.

Caroline. (ſighing and aſide). I think I ſhould like to be a dormouſe, if I were always to live in the country in the winter.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. Caroline, you do not ſeem to admire the beauty of this copſe. See, how it is already ſpangled with primroſes; and that lovely, though ſcentleſs flower, the wood anemony! Gather me a few of thoſe that are the moſt blown, my Henrietta! Look at theſe purple clouds that juſt ſtain the ſoft white leaves; and theſe rays of yellow, that form a little glory round the centre.

Caroline. Yes!—they are as pretty as wild flowers ever are.

Mrs. Woodfield. Do you recollect, that all flowers are wild in ſome quarter or other of the world; and that many of the moſt curious and beautiful plants in our gardens, are the wild flowers of Aſia, Africa, and America; many of the ſouthern parts of Europe, and ſome of colder countries?—But it is time to return towards home.

Henrietta (running back to her mother). Oh! mamma, here is a frightful beggarman coming! I am afraid of him;—ſuppoſe he ſhould want to hurt us!

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. I will not ſuppoſe it. The poor man ſeems to be an unfortunate cripple. So far from flying from him, I will ſtop and ſpeak to him. If he had any ill deſign, do you not ſee that Richard Anderſon is ſtill mending that hedge within a few paces of us, and that therefore we need not be alarmed?

(The beggar approaches, and tells a melancholy ſtory. Mrs. WOODFIELD *gives him ſome relief. The children alſo give him what half-pence they have about them, and proceed on their walk.)*

[HENRIETTA holding faſt her mother's hand; the two others keeping cloſe to her.]

Caroline. I'm glad the hedger is ſo near us, or I declare I ſhould have been frightened to death.

Elizabeth. I cannot ſay I like the looks of the man; beſides, mamma, I have heard a great many people ſay, that it

it is never any charity to give money to common beggars.

Mrs. Woodfield. I have not, for my part, ſagacity enough to diſtinguiſh what are called common beggars from poor men diſabled by illneſs from working, or accidentally diſtreſſed in a ſtrange country, where they have no claim to parochial relief. I only know, that in giving a few half-pence, it is poſſible I may encourage an idle vagabond, but it is alſo poſſible I may relieve an unfortunate fellow-creature; and it is beſt to do that which may afford a chance of doing good. On theſe occaſions, I ſeldom fail to recollect ſome beautiful lines of Langhorne's, which contain a pathetic apology for the unhappy wanderers called common beggars. Speaking of one of that deſcription, he ſays,

"Perhaps, on ſome inhoſpitable ſhore,
"The wretch, forlorn, a widow'd parent
"bore;

"Cold

" Cold, on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
" Perhaps that parent mourn'd her ſoldier
" ſlain,
" Hung o'er her babe, her eyes ſurcharg'd
" with dew,
" The ſalt drops mingling with the milk he
" drew,
" And wept, ſad omen of his future years,
" The child of miſery baptiz'd in tears!"

DIALOGUE III.

THE RUINED MONASTERY.

A FINE and mild morning tempted Mrs. Woodfield and her family to extend their walk to the Downs, which were at a ſmall diſtance from her houſe. To the meadows beneath theſe hills, the lambs, newly fallen, gave animation and beauty; while the wether flocks, on the higher grounds, began to enjoy the young herbage, ſlowly ſtealing over the withered turf. Half-way up was one of thoſe huts, conſtructed for the purpoſe of ſheltering the ſhepherd from the inclemency of the weather. Its humble occaſional inhabitant was not in it, but his daughter, a girl of twelve years old, and her two little brothers, were, eating their ſcanty dinner, which conſiſted only of ſome cruſts of bread, and two or three half-boiled

half-boiled potatoes. Notwithſtanding the poorneſs of their fare, and the little covering they wore, they ſeemed to be healthy and happy. Mrs. Woodfield bade them bring out to the door a wooden bench that was within the hut, and which ſerved its ruſtic inmates for both table and chairs; and, while ſhe ſat there, with Caroline and Elizabeth on each ſide of her, ſhe pointed out to their obſervation ſeveral objects in the vale beneath them. Two of theſe, the ſeats of two perſons of different characters, gave occaſion for ſome remarks "on the uſe and abuſe of riches."

Mrs. Woodfield. In that houſe, far to the left, lives Sir Herbert Harbottle. It is one of the moſt beautiful places in this part of the country; but Sir Herbert has no other pleaſure in it than as it ſupplies him with the luxuries of the table, to which he is extremely addicted. Selfiſh, proud, and unfeeling, his neighbours ſeldom know of his reſidence in the country, but from the depredations he makes in

in purſuit of his game; not that he is a ſportſman, but he is a glutton. Nobody ever heard of his doing a generous action; nor has he a friend in the world. Poverty and miſery ſurround him, for his tenants are at rack-rent, and the peaſants are, at many ſeaſons of the year, without employment. The conſequence is, that he is continually complaining that his game is deſtroyed by poachers, and his farm-yard robbed by thieves.

Elizabeth. What a hateful man! I wonder any body ſpeaks to him.

Mrs. Woodfield. And yet this man is well received. See him at a public place, and you ſee him courted and bowed to by many men who love the good things that are to be found at his table too well to care about his character. Such men as

—— "Prefer no doubt,
"A knave with ven'ſon, to a ſaint without."

Caroline. There is a Lady Harbottle. I think, aunt; I have ſeen her at routs.

Mrs. Woodfield. The Lady you have ſeen is the widow of Sir Herbert's elder brother; a woman who has a very ſmall jointure out of the eſtate, which he pays with infinite reluctance, and for which this poor woman and two daughters are often compelled to wait many months.

Caroline. An odius man!

Mrs. Woodfield. And yet, Caroline, I dare ſay, you know, from the former obſervations you have made, that many of your London friends would think themſelves very happy to be addreſſed by Sir Herbert Harbottle, and would care little what was his character, if he would give them a title.

Caroline. Certainly, my dear aunt, a title *is* a pleaſant thing.

Mrs. Woodfield. Many fooliſh women have thought ſo, and have ſacrificed to a found the real happineſs of their lives. But, tell me, ſhould you be really happier, were you called Lady Caroline Cecil?

Caroline.

Caroline. No, perhaps, not really happier; though I don't know. It makes one happier to be reſpected, to have *place*, and to hear people ſay—"We will aſk Lady Caroline—Lady Caroline muſt know—We muſt not begin the dance till her Ladyſhip comes;" and ſo on.

Mrs. Woodfield. Such "mouth honor" can, I ſhould hope, give no pleaſure to a rational and thinking being. See thoſe fir trees in the diſtant horizon, which we diſtinguiſh only by their dark colouring. They bound one ſide of a park, which belongs to a man, who is more reſpected *without* a title, than Sir Herbert Harbottle would be if he were the firſt Peer of England.

Elizabeth. Who is it, mamma?

Mrs. Woodfield. It is Mr. Somerville, my dear, of whom you have often heard me ſpeak. I think you were once with me when he dined at Brightwell-Houſe with a large party. He is a man who

poſſeſſes a princely fortune, and whoſe whole life paſſes in a ſeries of generous and obliging actions. His neigbours almoſt adore him. There is not a peaſant within ten miles of him, who would not, to uſe their own ruſtic phraſe, "go through fire and water to ſerve him, by night or by day." Though he lives in ſplendor proportioned to his fortune, it is without oſtentation, and without extravagance; and never yet did he ſee anguiſh impreſſed on the countenance, even of a common acquaintance, without attempting to relieve it. Is a farmer diſtreſſed by bad ſeaſons, or accidental loſſes? Mr. Somerville will aſſiſt him with his purſe, or his credit. Is a labourer ſinking under ſickneſs and poverty? It is by Mr. Somerville he is ordered medical advice, and from his kitchen comfortable nouriſhment. And all this, and much more, is without oſtentation. He thinks, that it is ſo far from being a matter of boaſt, that he does merely his duty.

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth. O, mamma! what an happy woman his wife muſt be!

Mrs. Woodfield. Alas! my dear Elizabeth, he has no wife; ſhe has been dead many years, and left him two ſons and a daughter.

Elizabeth. *They* muſt be happy then, mamma.

Mrs. Woodfield. I wiſh they were, my love, for the ſake of their excellent father; but it is, unfortunately, quite otherwiſe.

Caroline. Yet I have often heard, aunt, that good parents make good children, and, of courſe, happy ones.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is a melancholy reflection, that this rule is by no means without exception. The eldeſt of Mr. Somerville's ſons learned very early that he was heir to a very great fortune. At ſchool, he was idle, diſſipated, and expenſive; theſe

theſe vices gathered ſtrength at college. He ſpent ſo much money there, that, notwithſtanding his father's liberal allowance, he left it ſome thouſands in debt, at a very early age; not being able to bear even the little reſtraint that merely belonging to a ſociety laid upon his actions. His father, not knowing what to do with him, conſented to his going abroad, when he made exactly the ſort of tour deſcribed by Lord Cheſterfield, and returned what is now called "a fine man "about town." He plays very deep, runs into a thouſand abſurd exceſſes, and ſeldom or never ſees his father, with whom he has no ideas in common, and who cannot help reflecting with regret, that his fortune will fall into the hands of a man who will diſgrace his name.

Caroline. But his other ſon?—

Mrs. Woodfield. Turns out equally unworthy ſuch a father. This young man, who was educated at home, in conſequence of the ill ſucceſs of a public education

education with his elder brother, moſt unhappily took, by the neglect of his tutor, a turn for low company; he was unhappy, and under viſible reſtraint, when he was not either in the ſtable or in the ſervants' hall. In the hope of breaking through theſe habits, his father ſent him to Geneva; but they were already become inveterate. He married there an Engliſhwoman, whoſe obſcure birth his father would have overlooked, if ſhe had been a perſon of good character; as it was, this generous and tender parent forgave him, and, on his return to England, gave him a very handſome eſtabliſhment; but his wife was ſo bad an œconomiſt, ſo extravagant, and ſo diſſipated, that he ſoon became embarraſſed. Mutual reproaches and recrimination enſued; they quarrelled, and parted.

Thus deprived of all proſpect of future comfort in regard to his ſons, Mr. Somerville turned towards his daughter, as his ſole conſolation. Alas! the

promiſe

promiſe of happineſs, with which ſhe had three years before been married, was already blighted. Her huſband, a man of faſhion, who, at the beginning of their union, had appeared extremely attached to her, had no longer any affection for her, nor did he take the trouble to wear even its ſemblance. His family, of which he was the only male heir, were diſpleaſed that ſhe brought him no children, and treated her with coldneſs and neglect. She loſt her health, and now paſſes almoſt all her time with her father, who endeavours, by tenderneſs and attention, to heal the wounds of a broken heart, which are, I fear, ſlowly, but certainly, condemning her to an early grave.

Elizabeth. How often, my dear mamma, you have told us that good people are always happy; but it does not ſeem to be ſo in regard to poor Mr. Somerville.

Mrs. Woodfield. It does not *ſeem* to be ſo certainly; yet, from what I know of this

this excellent man, I am perſuaded that, ſuffering as he does, under the cruelleſt and moſt bitter of all misfortunes, parental diſappointment, he feels internal ſerenity, of which not even *that* can rob him. Conſcious of having done his duty towards his children, he has no reproaches to make himſelf. His example and his precepts have been invariably good; and, however his cares have failed, he feels that they have been ever exerted for the advantage of the objects of his tenderneſs.

Such reflections, his religion, which promiſes him undiſturbed felicity in a future ſtate of exiſtence, and the continual exerciſe of benevolence towards his fellow-creatures, on whom he is ever endeavouring to beſtow the happineſs he cannot taſte himſelf, certainly give to him that tranquillity, which, with leſs ſtrength of underſtanding, and leſs excellence of heart, he could not enjoy. How different are the ſenſations of his neighbour, the man we were before

ſpeaking of! Wrapped up in ſelfiſh enjoyments, and unintereſted about every body, he is yet ſubject to continual diſpleaſure and uneaſineſs. His pride and his ſelf-love are continually mortified. He knows how little he deſerves the reſpect of which he is ſo tenacious, and therefore perpetually ſuſpects every body of a diſpoſition to fail in it. He would fain be of conſequence in the county where his property lies, and has tried, once or twice, to make an impreſſion of that conſequence at public meetings; but, having never cultivated the little underſtanding he poſſeſſed, he raiſed contempt by his blunders, inſtead of reſpect by his eloquence: And not bearing to become an object of ridicule, he quarrelled with thoſe whom he thought ſaw him in that light, and then eſcaped, by mean ſubmiſſion, from the reſentment his teſtineſs brought upon him. But do not let us talk of him any more; let us rather contemplate the beauty of the landſcape before us. Can imagination form any thing more lovely?

Caroline.

Caroline. Certainly, it is very fine.

Mrs. Woodfield. And yet, my dear Caroline, that cold aſſent makes me doubt, whether you are ſo entirely weaned from your former attachments, as not to think the coaches, that form a continual line from the end of Piccadilly to the gate of Kenſington Gardens, of a fine Sunday morning, at this ſeaſon of the year, a more beautiful ſpectacle, than the moſt romantic proſpect you can behold, dreſſed in the vivid colours of ſpring.

Caroline. I muſt think it more amuſing, aunt. Beſides, I have heard you expreſs a diſlike to the affectation of being in raptures at proſpects, and of making a parade of taſte for *pictureſque beauty;* I have heard you often ſay it was tireſome cant.

Mrs. Woodfield. I ſtill believe it to be ſo with many people, and from them (for nothing is more eaſy than to detect the affectation) I always hear ſuch exclamations with diſguſt. Juſt as I hear the

raptures

raptures of Miſs Croſsbrook about muſic, when I know that ſhe has no ear, and does not diſtinguiſh a country dance from a minuet. But though an ear is not to be acquired, ſince it is a gift from nature, yet a taſte for rural beauty certainly may; and it is that taſte I wiſh to give *you*, my children, who, from the narrowneſs of your fortunes, will probably paſs your whole lives in the country. Believe me, it is a ſixth ſenſe. The beautiful forms and varied foliage of the trees, the colouring given to the ſcenery by the different poſition of the ſun, or the intervention of dark or illumined clouds; the rich ſhadows of rocks, where they happen to ornament a country, their groteſque forms, with roots of trees ſtarting from their deep receſſes, or fern feathering their rugged ſides; grey ruins, in other times the habitations of grandeur, the bulwarks of the country, or the retreats of religious ſocieties, now mouldering in decay, and much more beautiful, in the eye of the landſcape painter, than when in their former ſplendour;

ſplendour; all theſe, as well as the cottage covered with vines, or half hid by hops; the blue ſmoke from the low chimney curling through the ſtraggling fruit trees of their little gardens; ſuch, and numberleſs other objects, which are neglected, or appear inſipid to the common obſerver, become objects of intereſt and amuſement to thoſe who have learned to look at them with the eye of a painter or a poet.

Caroline. Alas! my dear aunt, I ſhall never be either.

Mrs. Woodfield. A poet I would not wiſh you to be; but I would have you cultivate your talents for drawing. It will now be a conſtant ſource of amuſement and delight; and who knows, my dear Caroline, but it may hereafter be a reſource againſt the inconveniences of adverſity? Let it not mortify your pride that I ſay this. Recollect that your poor father is a ſoldier; that every hour his life is expoſed amid the dangers of the ſevereſt ſervice; that he has not been able

able to lay up any thing; and that you would have only a ſmall penſion to ſupport you. Why ſhould you think yourſelf diſgraced (as I ſee you do by your tears) at my naming this? Reflect, my child, how many perſons, who were born in a higher rank of life than you were, even in the firſt claſſes of the nobility of France, are now reduced to the neceſſity of labouring for their daily bread in a ſtrange land; how many derive their ſupport from the little ornamental acquirements of their more fortunate days. Nor is this confined to the natives of a country where the overthrow of its antient government has overwhelmed the nobility in its ruins. Even in this proſperous land, how often do we ſee ſuch ſad viciſſitudes of fortune. How often does the luxury, the folly, or the misfortunes of parents leave deſtitute and helpleſs young women expoſed to inſult, too often to infamy; for thoſe who cannot bear poverty will eſcape from it, however ruinous the means by which they eſcape. Come, my dear Caroline, do not

not let what I have ſaid depreſs you too much. Believe me, I ſhould not, to my brother's daughter, recommend any *prevoyance* of this ſort, that I do not think equally applicable and proper for my own. Elizabeth, do you recollect that, ſome time in September we took this walk, and returned by the ruins of Heardly Abbey? You remember that you attempted, and not quite without ſucceſs, to draw a view of it. But Caroline, who is a much greater proficient than you are, will, I am ſure, give a much better repreſentation of it. Shall we make it in our way home, my dear, that you may judge how far it is a ſubject for your pencil? Hid among the woods that ſhadow the foot of this hill, on the confluence of three ſmall brooks, which, united there, fall into the river about a quarter of a mile below, it is a relict of antiquity very little known; and, unlike Netley, and ſome other equally celebrated monaſtic ruins, it has hitherto been neglected, alike by the pencil and the pen.

Caroline

Caroline (ſighing deeply, and trying to recover herſelf) I do not remember that I have ever ſeen the ruins of an abbey.

Mrs. Woodfield. This abbey was a ſmall one, and perhaps, as a ſubject for the pencil, will appear leſs eligible now, than when Elizabeth and I laſt viſited it; for it was then autumn, and the partially faded trees, the peculiar gentle gloom of evening towards the end of September, were more in harmony with the melancholy air of the place, than the vivid green of April, or the bright ſunſhine of a ſpring morning.

Henrietta. Mamma, before we go, pray tell me whether you will grant me a favour?

Mrs. Woodfield. I dare ſay I ſhall; for I already fancy I know what you would aſk. It is permiſſion to do ſome kindneſs to this ſhepherd's little girl.

Henrietta. You have gueſſed right, mamma. Do you know, ſhe has been telling me that her mother is dead; and that

that there are five of them? Poor little creatures! ſhe is the eldeſt, and they have no mother to take care of them, only her poor father, who is out all day with farmer Harris's flock; and ſometimes they go all day without eating; and have nobody to mend their clothes, or do any thing in the world for them!

Ever alive to the voice of human miſery, Mrs. Woodfield now inquired into the truth of this ſad ſtory, which ſhe found Henrietta had not at all exaggerated. She deſired the child to ſend the poor ſhepherd to her the next day, intending to do him ſome more permanent ſervice, than giving him mere preſent relief. This, however, ſhe ſuffered Henrietta to do, by giving ſome money to the little girl, and they then purſued their walk.

Caroline, by degrees, re-aſſumed her cheerfulneſs. They reached Heardly Abbey, and wandered a while among its beautiful ruins. Mrs. Woodfield pointed out the different purpoſes of the orginal

original building. "Here," ſaid ſhe, "was the refectory, there the chapel; theſe are ſuppoſed to have been the cells of the monks. There were only, according to tradition, a ſuperior, twelve brethren, and four lay brothers. They were of the order of St. Dominic; and, at the Reformation, this was, with other religious ſocieties, diſſolved, and the lands belonging to it were ſeized by the crown."

Henrietta. Mamma, what was the Reformation? Was it a revolution, ſuch as people are always talking about now?

Mrs. Woodfield. No, my dear. Your ſiſter Elizabeth will tell you, that the Reformation, which means the period when the Engliſh people proteſted againſt the ſuperſtitions of the church of Rome, (from whence they acquired the name of Proteſtants,) was effected rather from the caprice of the ſanguinary tyrant, Henry the Eighth, than from any regard he had to the real intereſts of religion. The Pope, influenced by the Emperor,

King

King of Spain, who was nephew to the unfortunate Catharine of Arragon, his firſt wife, refuſed to give his aſſent to the diſſolution of that marriage; and to the King of England's eſpouſing Anna Boleyn, one of her maids of honour, with whom he was enamoured. The conſequence of this was, that Henry, impatient of control, though ſtill a ſuperſtitious bigot, threw off the yoke, and emancipated his people from the impoſitions which had, till then, been faſtened on them, in the abuſed name of religion.

Elizabeth. Mamma, there is a gentleman, he looks like a clergyman, ſurveying the ruins. See! he is ſitting there on a piece of the broken wall!

Mrs. Woodfield. He has the appearance of a foreigner. Perhaps he is one of the French prieſts, who is, I have heard, at W——. Caroline, have you courage to ſpeak to him?

Caroline. It is ſo long ſince I have ſpoken to a native of France, that I know

know not how I ſhall acquit myſelf; I am almoſt afraid.

Mrs. Woodfield. Well, Caroline, I, who have been much leſs accuſtomed lately to ſpeak to foreigners, will venture.

They then entered the principal area of the ruined building. On a maſs of broken ſtone, covered with moſs and rock-plants, they beheld the venerable figure of a man near ſeventy. He aroſe as they approached. Mrs. Woodfield ſpoke to him in French. He appeared flattered and obliged by her notice; and related to her, that having been driven from his country, with many other of his brethren, becauſe he would not relinquiſh his principles, or violate his allegiance; "I now," ſaid he, "find a refuge with Mr. Carliſle, whom you may perhaps know."

Mrs. Woodfield. I do—and have always had an high opinion of his piety and benevolence.

The

The Abbé Bernard. But, notwithſtanding I have found in him ſuch a friend, I cannot ſubmit to be burdenſome to him, who is himſelf only the almoner and chaplain to the abſent Lord D*****. I have, therefore, thought of attempting to get employed as a teacher of French and Italian; being fortunately maſter of the latter from a three years reſidence at Rome. Perhaps, Madam, it may be in your power to aſſiſt me in this reſearch; I can venture to aſſure you of nothing but my diligence and my gratitude.

Mrs. Woodfield. Be aſſured, Sir, that I ſhall be moſt happy to be of any uſe to you in ſo laudable a purpoſe.

It was then, after ſome converſation, ſettled, that the Abbé Bernard, whoſe reſidence was at the diſtance of about three miles from that of Mrs. Woodfield, ſhould attend the young ladies twice a-week, during the ſummer, which he thought he could eaſily do, notwithſtanding his advanced age; for he was yet healthy, and, amidſt all his misfortunes,

tunes, cheerful and reſigned. He hoped ſometimes to be able to borrow a horſe; and, upon the whole, he parted from his new acquaintances, highly ſatisfied with the circumſtance of having met them.

Mrs. Woodfield was, on her part, not leſs ſatisfied, as ſhe had found at once an opportunity of doing ſome ſervice to a worthy and reſpectable man, and of acquiring for her family, communication of knowledge which ſhe had deſpaired of finding for them in their preſent ſituation.

As they paſſed homeward, ſhe gave to Caroline and to Elizabeth, who eagerly liſtened to her, the outline of thoſe events that had driven the clergy of France to ſeek a refuge in England; and ſhe repeated to them the juſt and beautiful ſentiment of Mrs. Hannah More, which has ſince been enforced by the pathetic exhortation of the authoreſs of Evelina and Cecilia. The three girls ſeemed equally eager to make the little ſacrifices, ſo properly recommended, and were

were delighted with the idea of their new maſter.

Caroline. I did not forget my drawing, aunt, while I was liſtening to you. This is the ſketch I have made of the remaining walls, and the ſtone-work of the Gothic window oppoſite to which we ſat, while you were converſing with the Abbé Bernard.

Mrs. Woodfield. Upon my word, Caroline, this is extremely well! Very free and well-drawn. A little more broken pieces about this ſide, and a few larger maſſes of ſtones, half mantled with ſhrubs and ivy, in the fore-ground, and nothing can be better.

Caroline. Should there not be a human figure in it, Madam?

Mrs. Woodfield. It would be a great improvement. Before you finiſh the drawing, we will ſee whether we cannot introduce the venerable Abbé. Methought, when I firſt ſaw him, he ſeemed moſt

moſt happily placed; could he be deſcribed by the pencil in the very attitude he then ſat in: and could his figure, on paper, be made to repreſent the effect on it of the melancholy reflections which, I have no doubt, occupied him at that moment; when, from the recent deſtruction of religious houſes in his own country, he was led, by accident, to contemplate the dilapidation of ſuch buildings, which was effected, many years ſince, in ours. There is ſomething in this reflection particularly mournful, I doubt not, to him: I recollect ſome lines (I believe, of Prior's) that are extremely applicable to the preſent unhappy ſtate of the French clergy:

"With irkſome anguiſh then your prieſts ſhall
"mourn,
"Their long neglected feaſts; deſpaired re-
"turn,
"And ſad oblivion of their ſolemn days;
"Henceforth their voices they ſhall only raiſe
"Louder to weep!"

DIALOGUE IV.

THE NIGHTINGALE'S NEST.

THE beauty of the country now daily increaſed; the ſpring was mild and forward; Eaſter happened to fall very late, and the little boys, Harry and Edward, were at home for about ten days.

Their ſiſter and their couſin were now employed for ſome hours every morning in repairing the children's linen, or making up new againſt their return to ſchool, after theſe ſhort holidays; but their walks were continued.

That of the firſt day after the boys arrival was through woods, which were already nearly in leaf. The reluctant oak and the timid aſh, no longer reſiſting the warmth of the ſun, were ſlowly unfolding their freſh leaves. The hedges and underwoods were every where green, and afforded concealment and ſhelter to an infinite number of birds, now buſy in building their neſts.

Liſtening to this wild concert, Mrs. Woodfield repeated from Thomſon thoſe lines in which he ſo well deſcribes it.

—— " Every copſe
" Deep tangled, tree irregular, and buſh
" Bending with dewy moiſture o'er the heads
" Of the coy queriſters that lodge within,
" Are prodigal of harmony. The thruſh
" And woodlark o'er the kind contending
" throng
" Superior heard, run through the ſweeteſt
" length
" Of notes; while liſtening Philomela deigns
" To let them joy, and purpoſes, in thought
" Elate, to make her night excel their day."

" This, however," added ſhe, " is not quite true; for it is certain that the nightingale ſings like other birds during the day, but is then not diſtinguiſhed ſo much from the reſt; it is the night-ſong which, as Milton ſays, ſhe

" Warbles at eve, when all the woods are
" ſtill,"

that has, as much as her delicious notes, given her the pre-eminence, and made the nightingale particularly the favourite of the poets."

Hardly

Hardly had ſhe finiſhed the ſentence, when little Edward, who had wandered on before, came running back out of breath, without his hat, which he held in his hand, and in which, with delight ſparkling in his eyes, he ſhewed his brother a neſt of young unfledged birds.

Edward. Oh, Harry! ſee, my dear Harry, what a neſt of Birds! The boys there, that have taken them, ſay they are nightingales. Mamma, tell me if I may buy them? They aſk only ſixpence for them. I will give you half of them, Harry.

Harry. Mamma, are they nightingales? May we have them?

Mrs. Woodfield. Indeed, I am afraid they *are* nightingales; and they are ſo tender, that you will never be able to rear them, ſo that to take them ſeems to be wanton cruelty.

Harry. But, Mamma, theſe *are* taken already; and I am ſure, if they are the tendereſt little things in the world, my

ſiſter Henrietta will nurſe them up. Don't you remember how ſhe nurſed the young goldfinches, which the cat threw down from the almond tree in the garden?

Mrs. Woodfield. Poor, little, unfortunate creatures! ſee how they pant! I have no other objection to your buying them, my dear Harry, than as I think it encourages idle boys to continue their robberies on the birds. But, however, as theſe poor nightingales *are* priſoners, I believe we may reſcue them out of worſe hands by taking them into ours. Can the boys there tell you where they took them from? Perhaps, after they are out of ſight, we may be able to put them back into the tree where they were hatched.

[The two boys go, though with ſome little reluctance, and aſk the peaſant children to ſhew them the place.]

Edward (returning to his mother). Mamma, the boys ſay they got this neſt out of a buſh of black thorn and holly, quite in the very middle of the wood, almoſt

moſt a mile off; and they don't believe they can find the place again for ever ſo much.

Mrs. Woodfield. Well, my loves, then pay for your purchaſe, and we will do the beſt we can with it. Your luckleſs little captives will ſoon be hungry, and we ſhall find nothing to give them here; therefore I would have you, Henrietta, and your two brothers, go home, and find a ſecure cage for your nightingales, which muſt ſtill, however, remain in the neſt; and let your maid, Rachael, aſſiſt you in feeding them, as ſhe is fond of ſuch things, and underſtands ſomething of them. Caroline, Elizabeth, and I, ſhall continue our walk, as I have ſome buſineſs at the village of Woodhampton, with a woman who is ſpinning for me.

[The children go back to the houſe.]

Elizabeth. See how carefully little Edward ſteps with his treaſure.

Mrs. Woodfield. He will be an excellent nurſe to them, and ſo will Harry, as far as their judgment goes; but theſe unfortunate

tunate objects of childish tenderness, are not unfrequently killed by kindness. Neither of my little fellows have that disposition to cruelty which is said to be inherent in human nature, and which I have sometimes thought really is so, however degrading the idea may be.

Caroline. I am sure I have thought so very often, when I have seen how cruel the lower people are to animals.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is indeed, not only humiliating, but is to my feelings so distressing, that I seldom have passed through the streets of London, Paris, or Bath, or almost any great town, without seeing some instance of human cruelty and animal suffering that has dwelt upon my mind, and affected my spirits for the rest of the day.

Caroline. And is it impossible to punish such horrid monsters?

Mrs. Woodfield. The sufferings of these miserable victims of human barbarity have not been, and therefore, I suppose, cannot

cannot be, ſufficiently attended to by the legiſlature. An hackney coachman may whip his galled and tired horſe with impunity, though the exhauſted animal has not ſtrength to execute the taſk his brutal driver demands of him; for what poſitive law is there againſt a man's whipping his horſes? or how ſhall his management of them be regulated? The monſters called bullock-hunters, are ſometimes fined; but it ſeems as if the horrid delight of ſuch ſavages was greater than their fear of puniſhment, for the evil has never been leſſened. Were I a man, I am perſuaded I ſhould turn knight-errant in defence of the mere animal, againſt what are improperly called reaſonings beings. How beautifully does the inimitable Cowper treat this ſubject! Speaking of the domeſtic animals dependent on man, he ſays,

" They prove, too often, at how dear a rate
" He ſells protection. Witneſs at his foot
" The ſpaniel dying, for ſome venial fault,
" Under diſſection of the knotted ſcourge:
" Witneſs the patient ox, with ſtripes and yells
" Driven to the ſlaughter, goaded, as he runs,

" To

" To madneſs; while the ſavage at his heels
" Laughs at the frantic ſufferer's fury, ſpent
" Upon the guiltleſs paſſenger o'erthrown.
" He, too, is witneſs, nobleſt of the train
" That wait on man, the flight-performing horſe;
" With unſuſpecting readineſs he takes
" His murderer on his back; and pūſh'd all day,
" With bleeding ſides, and flanks that heave for
" life,
" To the far diſtant goal arrives—and dies.
" Does Law, ſo jealous in the cauſe of man,
" Denounce no doom on the delinquent? None.

And, alas! this is one of thoſe evils that ſatire, excellent and juſt even as this, can do but little to correct; for, as ſome periodical paper, (I think, the World,) in one of its eſſays, obſerves, coachmen, draymen, carmen, and drovers, do not read eſſays; yet I have often fancied that ſomething might be done to ſoften the cruel hearts of the lower claſſes of people, if any perſon of abilities would adopt remonſtrances to their comprehenſion, and teach them to fear hereafter, ſuch puniſhments as they now inflict, in dreadful retaliation.

They were by this time arrived at a village, whoſe few ſtraggling houſes edged

edged the extenſive wood, and in a neat cottage found a decently dreſſed woman, whoſe huſband was a flax-dreſſer, and who was employed by Mrs. Denzil to ſpin for her. She deſired the woman to bring out ſome flax in its raw ſtate; deſcribed the proceſs of making it into tow, fit for ſpinning, and then made each of the girls endeavour to ſpin a thread. Not far from thence, in the ſame village, was a loom; they there ſaw it woven into ſheeting, and other coarſe linen. Their walk home was deſignedly varied. Mrs. Woodfield led them acroſs a ruſtic bridge, and along the banks of a rapid ſtream that turned a paper-mill, into which they entered, and ſaw the whole operation of making ſeveral kinds of paper. She then explained to them the materials and means by which it was made; and bade them carry their imaginations back; from the ſtalk of the flax they had ſeen, bearing a blue and ſimple flower trembling on its ſlender ſummit, through all its changes and modifications, till it contributes to make a ſheet of paper.

This ſpeculation amuſed them for the reſt of their walk. On their arrival at home, Caroline and Elizabeth were agreeably ſurprized by a card they found upon their table, inviting the whole family to a ball, given by the officers of a regiment quartered in a neighbouring town.

Pleaſure danced in the eyes of Caroline, when ſhe found Mrs. Woodfield intended to return an anſwer that they would accept this invitation. Nor was Elizabeth much leſs delighted. An immediate conſultation was held, as to the arrangements neceſſary; and Mrs. Woodfield, leaving them to enjoy this antepaſt of pleaſure, (all that life's deceptions frequently allow us to taſte, and which is at their ages ſo keenly taſted,) went to inſpect the little menagerie of the three younger children, lately increaſed by their nightingales, about which they were all anxiouſly employed. It was more neceſſary to repreſs their ill-judged ſolicitude, than to reprove them for careleſſneſs

leſſneſs of their little charge. But deſirous of teaching them to reflect, ſhe made uſe of the preſent opportunity; when the eldeſt of the two boys ſaid, "Mamma, I do not believe theſe little birds would be more comfortable if they were with their own mother."

Mrs. Woodfield. Admitting it to be ſo, my dear Harry, (though I greatly fear it is not the fact,) pray tell me what you think is the opinion of *their own* mother?

Harry. Perhaps ſhe may be a little ſorry, when ſhe comes back and finds the neſt gone.

Mrs. Woodfield. Harry! how do you think *I* ſhould feel, if, on my return from a journey, where I had been to procure money to pay for the ſubſiſtence of my children, I found my houſe vacant; and that ſome tyrant, whom I could not purſue or puniſh, had taken them from me, and condemned them to impriſonment or death? Tell me, Harry; and do you, Edward, tell me, how do you think your mamma would feel?

Harry

Harry (looking earneſtly and ſorrowful). Certainly, mamma, you would cry, and be very unhappy.

Mrs. Woodfield. Juſt ſo muſt the mother bird feel, when ſhe returns and finds the vacant bough from which her neſt has been torn. But, to impreſs this more forcibly on your memory, Harry, you ſhall write theſe lines in your copy-book:

" Oft, when returning with her loaded bill,
" Th' aſtoniſh'd mother finds a vacant neſt,
" By the hard hands of unrelenting clowns
" Robb'd; to the ground the vain proviſion falls;
" Her pinions ruffle, and, low drooping, ſcarce
" Can bear the mourner to the poplar ſhade."

Edward (with tears ſtarting in his eyes). Mamma, if I had thought about what the old bird muſt feel, I would have made the boys I bought theſe of, put the neſt back again.

Mrs. Woodfield. If you had done ſo, my dear little boy, it would hardly, in this caſe, have anſwered your humane intention; for thoſe idle boys, as ſoon as you were

were out of ſight, would have taken the neſt again, and have ſold the poor birds to ſome other perſon. What I mean is, not only to induce you to take care of them, ſince they now depend on you, but to engage you, in every caſe, to put yourſelf in the place of whatever creature you are about to injure or oppreſs; that you may acquire an habit of ſaying to yourſelf, How ſhould I like to be treated thus? What ſhould I ſuffer, if I were in the place of the cat we are wantonly hunting with our terriers? of the rooks which we are wounding with our arrows? of the ducks we are ſetting the ſpaniels at? Whoever learns early in life to make theſe reflections, will never have a reproach to make himſelf on the ſcore of humanity, either towards the animal, or the human ſpecies.

Henry. But, mamma, grown people hunt, and ſhoot, and fiſh, and do not ſeem to think there is any cruelty in it!

Mrs. Woodfield. So far as it becomes neceſſary to kill for our ſupport, the animals

animals Providence has allotted to us, there is nothing criminal in it; but to prolong their tortures is highly ſo, or wantonly to deſtroy any living creatures that are innoxious. For to-morrow's taſk, Edward ſhall write out for me theſe lines, on the ſubject of inferior animals, and even reptiles and inſects:

——"If man's convenience, health,
"Or ſafety, interfere, his rights and claims
"Are paramount, and muſt extinguiſh theirs;
"Elſe they are all, the meaneſt things that are,
"As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
"As God was free to form them at the firſt,
"Who, in his ſovereign wiſdom, made them all.
"Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your ſons
"To love it too."

And now, my dear boys, you muſt releaſe your ſiſter, Henrietta, for ſhe is going out to-morrow evening, and I fancy has ſome little preparation to make. My dear Henrietta, follow me.

[A room above ſtairs—CAROLINE and ELIZABETH conſulting about their dreſs.]

Caroline. I dare ſay I ſhall look as horribly old-faſhioned as poſſible; it is five months

months ſince I have ſeen any creature who could tell me what *they wear*.

Mrs. Woodfield (*entering*). "What they wear!" There is no term in the whole cant of frivolity that is half ſo diſguſting to me as that. Who are *they*, my dear Caroline, to whoſe mode of dreſs you are determined to pay ſuch obſequious deference?

Caroline (*confuſed*). Nay, aunt, I mean people that—people that are in the world, you know—that is—people—in ſhort——

Mrs. Woodfield. That are not twaddlers and quizzes, and grubs and goodies, and half an hundred other odd names, that you give to the folks you uſually meet with in the country. Tell me now, Caroline, if it would not have afforded you great pleaſure, had you known of this ball ſoon enough, to have written ſlily to your faſhionable friend, Miſs Freemantle, to have ſent you down ſome very whimſical dreſs, with a new name, ſuch as you imagine,

imagine, having never been ſeen in this country, would make people ſtare?

Caroline. I ſhould not have ventured to have done it without your leave, aunt.

Mrs. Woodfield. But, however, it would have given you pleaſure.

Caroline. Certainly; I ſhould not like to appear any where but properly dreſſed, if I could help it.

Mrs. Woodfield. And after all, what is ſo proper for a young perſon of your age, as perfect ſimplicity and neatneſs? You are ſtill in mourning, and would not, I hope, have thrown it off an hour ſooner on account of this public meeting.

Caroline. But all I am afraid of is, that if one is not a little faſhionable, one looks vulgar.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is infinitely more vulgar to appear at ſuch an aſſembly over-dreſt. Believe me, my dear, mere dreſs contributes nothing to that look of elegance, or, if you will, of ſuperiority, that

that you ſeem ſo jealous of. You will be convinced of this, if you ſhould ſee to-morrow evening, as you probably will, a Lady, named Scrafton, who is the firſt and the fineſt at all our rural aſſemblies; ſhe is the wife of a man who has a ſmall fortune in this county, but is often in London, as he is engaged in ſome buſineſs there. This woman, who is fat, ſhort, crooked, and coarſe, and who has neither the manners, the air, nor the voice of a gentlewoman, is the greateſt adept in faſhions I ever ſaw. She runs about for a week before the birth-days, from milliner to milliner, to ſee the ladies clothes, and then imagines ſomething like the moſt remarkable, with which to amaze her country neighbours. Her clothes are made up in every variety of extravagant faſhion, and each habiliment has ſome foreign name that ſhe cannot pronounce. Without the leaſt regard to proportion or propriety, ſhe dreſſes out her unfortunate perſon in the wildeſt mode of the wildeſt girl of faſhion, and the effect is, that ſhe creates envy in the weak,

weak, and pity in the wife; and, while she thinks herself on the very pinnacle of politeness and elegance, I see some look upon her as a mad woman, and all consider her as a fool. Have you any ambition, Caroline, to share, with such a woman as Mrs. Scrafton, the stare of rustic amazement?

Caroline. Dear aunt, can you suppose I have?

Mrs. Woodfield. Let us hear no more, then, of wishes to know what "*they wear.*" My mantua-maker, who makes for the attornies and apothecaries wives in the next market town, often forces me to smile, by advising me to have my gown made so and so, and assuring me *they wear* them so: And when I ask *who*; she simperingly informs me, that Miss Kitty Puffins, the daughter of Mr. Puffins, an eminent oilman in Carnaby Market, has been down to see her relations, the Miss Clutterbucks, and gave the mantua-maker, Miss Gibson, leave to look at her clothes, which were made up new

new to come into the country, "*quite in taſte.*"

Such are the rural hiſtories of *faſhions*. The belles, who derive their information from Miſs Puffins of Carnaby Market, will take the lead in elegance, perhaps for five miles round, till Sir James *****'s family arrive from London, after the birth-day, and then the ton of articles a la Puffins, will be entirely ſuperſeded by the knowledge acquired from the happier few who are admitted to contemplate the ſuperior elegance of the ladies of that houſe.

Do you think, Caroline, ſuch epheme-ron triumphs as theſe, are worth a moment's thought? I am far, however, from wiſhing you entirely to decline appearing what is called in the faſhion; ſuch affectation would be as ridiculous on one hand, as running into its wildeſt exceſſes is on the other. A young woman ſhould dreſs as the perſons of her age dreſs, but without ſacrificing decency, common ſenſe, or proportion. Nothing, perhaps,

perhaps, is a more glaring abſurdity, among all the weakneſſes women are charged with, than the undiſtinguiſhing avidity with which women of all ages and figures run into modes of dreſs, that cannot become them all, and probably diſfigures five out of ſix. Some ſlender girl of faſhion imagines, in the caprice of imputed perfections, a manner of dreſſing which ſhall ſhew every one of thoſe perfections. It ſucceeds; the men compliment, the Miſſes envy, and the mob wonder. In a few days, the fat red-faced matron of fifty; the dwarfiſh Miſs, who had owed her little conſequence to her heels and her head; the round ſnug damſel, as thick as ſhe is long; and the *genteel young lady*, that has lived on vinegar till ſhe is reduced to a ſtudy for an anatomiſt; all follow the faſhion: But hardly are they eſtabliſhed in it, before ſome other, more prepoſterous, ſucceeds; and the former,

"Like the baſeleſs fabric of a viſion,
"Leaves not a wreck behind;"

unleſs

unleſs it be in that deſcription of perſons who, in Shakeſpeare's time, were called,

"The velvet guards, and Sunday citizens."

I have often thought, that if it were poſſible to have a ſet of dolls dreſſed in the faſhions of the laſt two hundred years, it would be an amuſing ſpectacle, and not without its uſe, as a leſſon to human vanity. The modes are now forgotten, and the names of the triflers who invented them are forgotten too; the only memorial that remains of either exiſts, perhaps, in ſome book, where they are accidentally alluded to, and which the commentary of the anti-quarian and the may have explained.

It ſhould be a leſſon to the ſpangled butterfly of the paſſing day, and it ſhould teach her the ſuperiority of intellect over beauty, when ſhe reflects, that the charms of ſo many lovely women live now only in the memory of mankind by the poets who have celebrated their names. Even the beautiful Lady Coventry is obliged to Maſon for telling us what ſhe was. "The liquid luſtre of her eyes" is remembered

membered but faintly by thoſe who yet remember her. There is a ſonnet of Drayton's, addreſſed to a Lady, whoſe merit he glories in being able to reſcue from oblivion, which is oppoſite to this topic. It is not ſo poliſhed as modern poetry; but is highly expreſſive of his opinion of the power of poeſy, and of thoſe objects of tranſient admiration, of whom it has been ſaid,

"They had no poet, and they died."

DRAYTON's *Sixth Sonnet.*

"How many fooliſh, paltry, painted things,
"That now in coaches trouble every ſtreet,
"Shall be forgotten—whom no poet ſings
"Ere' they are well wrapped in their winding ſheet;
"But *I* to *thee* eternity ſhall give,
"When nothing elſe remaineth of theſe days,
"And queens hereafter ſhall be glad to live
"Upon the alms of thy ſuperfluous praiſe
"Virgins and matrons, reading thus my rhymes,
"Shall be ſo much delighted with thy ſtory,
"That they ſhall grieve they lived not in theſe times,
"To have ſeen thee, their ſexes greateſt glory.
"For thou ſhalt ſoar above the vulgar throng,
"And ſtill ſurvive in my immortal ſong!"

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE V.

THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

THE ball ſo anxiouſly expected was over. Caroline, who had formed a very different idea of an aſſembly of that ſort in the country, had been ſurpriſed to ſee a great number of faſhionable people, as well as many who thought themſelves ſo; and that, far from being conſidered as ſomething extraordinary, from the ſtyle of life ſhe had formerly been in, and her reputed accompliſhments, nobody ſeemed particularly to think about her. She piqued herſelf extremely on the ſuperiority of her dancing, having been taught many years by the moſt faſhionable maſters; but ſhe had the mortification of obſerving, that the nymphs of the country town, who had received only a few leſſons from an itinerant maſter, that travels the country in "a chaiſe and one," thought themſelves quite as expert, and, for aught

ſhe

ſhe could ſee, were quite as much applauded. Caroline, however, endeavoured to conceal her diſappointment; but her aunt, who had watched her narrowly the whole evening, had not failed to obſerve it. When they met the next morning at breakfaſt, the people they had ſeen the night before, were, of courſe, the ſubject of their diſcourſe; and when Mrs. Woodfield came down, ſhe found her niece and her eldeſt daughter talking very earneſtly, allowing ſome to be tolerable, but declaring that ſome were odious, and others abſolutely horrible. This converſation ſhe did not check as ſhe entered; and, after a momentary ſilence, Caroline was too full of the occurrences of the ball not to renew it.

Caroline. We were ſaying, aunt, that the Mrs. Scrafton you deſcribed to us, as being always ſo over-dreſſed, was the moſt horrible fright we ever ſaw.

Mrs. Woodfield. Yet you allow that ſhe was moſt faſhionably dreſſed, and you might ſee that half the women envied her ſuperiority

ſuperiority in that reſpect, while they were heartily glad to ſee her look ſo ugly; and conſoled themſelves, that though their dreſſes were not like hers, immediately new from London, they looked infinitely better than ſhe did, with all her expenſive novelties.

Caroline. To be ſure, there are people to whom nothing can give a look of faſhion.

Mrs. Woodfield. But what do you think of Mrs. Bannerman, and her ſiſter Miſs Fanſhaw?

Caroline. Humph! They are prettyiſh looking women.

Mrs. Woodfield. They are reckoned very great beauties, and, beſides, people of the very firſt world. Fed by the flattery and adulation of a weak mother, who, though very plain herſelf, inſiſted upon her daughters being celebrated toaſts, they entered upon the world, convinced they were ſo; and it ſometimes happens in this caſe, as in others, that preſumption and aſſurance

carry their points, when ſenſe and diffidence would fail. Arrogant and ſuperficial, Mrs. Bannerman, though married, is ſtill a coquet; and you ſee how the men flatter her, and what ridiculous airs ſhe gives herſelf. I was acquainted with her when I lived in town, (though now we hardly curtſey to each other,) and I have ſeen men whom ſhe was moſt deſirous of attracting, ſuffer her to ſucceed, ſo far as to appear to be ſtruck with her, and aſſiduous about her for half an hour; but with no other purpoſe in the world but to make her ridiculous, by the fine attitudes into which ſhe put herſelf, and the affected grimaces ſhe made.

Caroline. I never ſaw ſuch an inſolent proud looking woman; ſhe ſeems to think every body beneath her.

Mrs. Woodfield. And ſhe really does think ſo of every body, unleſs it be a few of her own aſſociates. A rage for rank has often made her more laughed at than her other foibles. But ſhe is, in every part of her character, a woman I

diſlike.

diſlike. Without any knowledge, ſhe is always talking and dictating; is very little ſcrupulous about truth, and has a heart the moſt callous that I ever obſerved a woman to poſſeſs.

Elizabeth. Her ſiſter is a great deal handſomer than ſhe is.

Mrs. Woodfield. And her ſiſter would be infinitely more amiable, if ſhe did not imitate her; but unfortunately, ſeeing how well the bold and daſhing manners of the elder have ſucceeded in the very material object of getting her a rich huſband, Miſs Fanſhaw purſues the ſame line of conduct, with a character eſſentially different, and a perſon ſoft and intereſting; in vanity, however, ſhe is not inferior to her ſiſter.

Caroline. I could not help obſerving that ſhe ſeemed to think it a mighty condeſcenſion in them to dance; and when they *did*, marched up to the top of the room, as if they had been the daughters of a peer at leaſt.

Mrs. Woodfield. And yet the daughter of a city knight would have put them down, had ſuch a one been there; ſo poor are the advantages of rank, and ſo ridiculous is it to aſſume it. Another inſtance of rudeneſs I remarked, which was, that having gone down the dance the two firſt couples, they had no ſooner reached the bottom than they ſat down.

Caroline and Elizabeth ſpeaking together. But you were extremely angry with us.—

Mrs. Woodfield. Speak one at a time, dear girls, if you pleaſe.

Elizabeth. You were angry with my couſin and me, mamma, for ſitting down juſt at laſt, when we were quite tired, and when there were only four couple of trumpery people, and Henrietta, and ſome other children, dancing.

Mrs. Woodfield. What do you mean, pray, by trumpery people? If they were good enough for you to dance down the dance with, they were certainly good enough

enough for you to ſtand up while *they* alſo went down. And as for your term, *trumpery people*, do not let me hear it again, Elizabeth. The only trumpery people I know of, are thoſe who pretend to what they cannot properly reach, in finery and appearance. Such people are really trumpery; for they are gaudy but worthleſs. Very certainly, however, even ſuch folly, on the part of ſtrangers in a public room, is no reaſon for rudeneſs on the part of others, and nothing can juſtify ill-breeding. But, in this particular inſtance, I had another reaſon for checking you and your couſin for your rude inattention. One of the young ladies who was coming down the dance, and who came down late, becauſe her modeſty and diffidence did not allow her to put herſelf at the top, was Miſs Harley, who certainly is of a much better family than almoſt any one in the room, and who, in my opinion, has loſt none of the reſpect that is due to that advantage, from her being totally deſtitute of fortune, and dependent on the bounty of another.

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth, you know her ſtory; where was your heart when you could treat her with contempt? your couſin is more excuſable, who did not know her.

Elizabeth (confuſed). I am ſure, mamma, I never meant it;—upon my word, I did not know it was Miſs Harley; or, at leaſt, I did not think of it.

Mrs. Woodfield. No!—It was ſeeing her among the ſet at the bottom, with two or three of the people of the town, and the little girls and boys, that made you, without reflection, treat her with the ſame contempt as Mrs. Bannerman and her ſiſter treated you, who probably, if they deigned to think about you at all, conſidered you not only as children, but as ſo much their inferiors, that it was not worth their while to give themſelves the trouble of remaining in their places till you paſſed them. See another inſtance of the perpetual inattention I complain of, to the firſt principle of all moral rectitude; how ill you can bear yourſelf

to

to ſubmit to affronts which you unfeelingly, inflict on others.

Elizabeth (the tears ſtreaming from her eyes). I will make an apology to Miſs Harley with all my heart, mamma; I am ſure I would not have hurt her for the world.

Mrs. Woodfield. I ſhall think no more of it now; but let it hereafter be a rule with you, never to do an ill-bred action, becauſe you believe the people you are with, are either inferior, or younger than yourſelf. In a public room, every perſon is on an equality, though precedence is never denied to thoſe who have really a right to it. But now we will put off the reſt of our remarks till after dinner, and take a walk. You both look fatigued, and nothing will help to recover you ſo ſoon as the freſh air, perfumed, as it is this morning, by multitudes of flowers. As the Abbé is coming at two o'clock, we can go no farther than the garden.

[They go thither.]

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. Come with me to my hyacinths. Ah! they will ſoon be all blown! How beautiful they are already, and how well they will repay me for the pains I took with them in the winter!

Caroline. I think, aunt, auriculas are ſtill prettier.

Mrs. Woodfield. I am divided in my affections, and can hardly tell you which I prefer. But I am indeed an enthuſiaſt in my paſſion for flowers; and I think the happieſt hours to which I can carry my recollection in thinking of my paſt life, are thoſe when I was a girl of ten or eleven years old, and was ſuffered, nay encouraged, to cultivate myſelf a little ſpot of ground, in a part of a garden of my father's, appropriated entirely to flowers. How deep, even at this diſtance of time, does the impreſſion remain of thoſe ſimple objects which then charmed my ſenſes! Againſt the wall there was a double pomegranate, mingling its ſcarlet bloſſoms, almoſt too dazzling to look at, with thoſe of a broad-leaved myrtle. A

paſſion

paſſion flower interwove itſelf on one ſide; on the other the double purple clematis. Do you know, girls, that I believe I could now draw every flower, juſt as they were diſpoſed in my border?

Elizabeth. Mamma, I do not remember that you remarked this auricula yeſterday morning; I think it is the fineſt among them all. Pray, of what country are theſe beautiful flowers?

Mrs. Woodfield. The auricula is, I believe, the cowſlip of the Alps. It is one of thoſe flowers which owes much of its beauty and variety to the ſkill of the gardener. As weakneſs and folly break out even in the indulgence of the moſt innocent amuſements, there have been people, who have gone to ſuch expences in the cultivation of theſe flowers, as greatly to have injured their fortunes. But this mania has prevailed ſtill more in regard to tulips; and was once found to be ſo deſtructive in Holland, that the folly was checked by an act of the Le-

giſlature, but not, however, till it had occaſioned the ruin of many families.

Elizabeth. I recollect ſome ſtory told by Pope, is it not? of a Quaker deſtroying ſome favourite flower, to which he thought his neighbour was too much attached.

Mrs. Woodfield. I believe you are right; we will look for the lines when we go in. In the mean time, try, my dear, to recollect Thomſon's pretty catalogue of flowers:

Elizabeth.

" Along theſe bluſhing borders, bright with dew,
" And in yon mingled wilderneſs of flowers,
" Fair-handed Spring unboſoms every grace,
" Throws out the ſnow-drop and the crocus firſt,
" The daiſy, primroſe, violet, darkly blue,
" And polyanthus of unnumber'd dyes,
" The yellow wall-flower ſtain'd with iron-brown,
" And laviſh ſtock that ſcent the garden round.
" From the ſoft wing of vernal breezes, ſheds
" Anemonies; auriculas enrich'd
" With ſhining meal o'er all their velvet leaves;
" And full ranunculas of glowing red;
" Then come the tulip race, where beauty plays
" Her idle freaks; from family diffus'd
" To family, as flies the father's duſt,

" The

" The varied colours run; and, while they break
" On the charmed eye, the exulting floriſt marks,
" With ſecret pride, the wonders of his hand."

Mrs. Woodfield. You obſerve that he mentions the art of the gardener in breaking, as it is called, the tulip, which is done by changing the ground, and other means, with which I am but imperfectly acquainted. Originally, tulips are of that dull reddiſh purple, which you ſometimes obſerve among the common ones in the borders of the ſhrubbery.

Caroline. And, after all the pains and expence that is beſtowed upon them, they have no ſmell, and are certainly a ſhewy, but not a very pretty flower.

Mrs. Woodfield. I am quite of your opinion, Caroline. A bed of tulips is a gay ſight, and ſometimes the flowers are elegantly ſtriped; but, upon the whole, it is a plant for which I have no great partiality. Here is one I love much better; this modeſt unaſſuming Lily of the Valley. Some years ago, I was much in the ſociety of two young women of very

very different diſpoſitions. One of them, like Mrs. Bannerman, was vain, arrogant, and daring. She painted high, and never ſcrupled to adopt the moſt extravagant faſhions, which ſhe thought would ſhew to advantage a perſon of which ſhe was ridiculouſly vain. And to ſuch an exceſs did ſhe carry this, that ſhe was frequently inſulted in the ſtreets, being taken for one of thoſe unhappy women who walk there for the purpoſe of being remarked and followed. Far, however, from being mortified at theſe affronts, ſhe triumphed in them, and believed they were occaſioned ſolely by the power that her charms had over all ſorts of people.

The other was mild, generous, and unaſſuming. Leſs ſtriking at firſt ſight, ſhe always won upon thoſe who ſaw her a ſecond time, while her couſin, Maria, (for they were near relations,) excited ſomething like wonder the firſt time, but ever afterwards diſguſt. Though to correct the one was utterly hopeleſs, I wiſhed (for I loved her extremely) to praiſe without

without flattery, the modeſt merit of the other.

I believe I can repeat the ſonnet I wrote to her.

SONNET.

Miranda! mark, where, ſhrinking from the gale,
Its ſilken leaves yet moiſt with morning dew,
That fair faint flower, the Lily of the Vale,
Droops its meek head, and looks, methinks, like you!

Wrapped in its modeſt veil of tender green,
Its ſnowy bells a ſoft perfume diſpenſe,
And bending, as reluctant to be ſeen,
In ſimple lovelineſs it ſoothes the ſenſe.

With boſom bar'd to meet the gariſh day,
The glaring tulip, gaudy, undiſmay'd,
Offends the eye of taſte, and turns away,
And ſeeks the Lily in her fragrant ſhade.

So, in unconſcious beauty, penſive, mild,
Miranda ſtill ſhall charm—Nature's ingenuous child.

Elizabeth. Pray tell me, mamma, whether one of theſe ladies was mortified, and the other improved?

Mrs. Woodfield. That is not in my power; for the former was too proud, too

too much wrapped up in a perfect conviction of her own excellence, and a ſovereign contempt for the opinion of others, to ſhew that ſhe even underſtood the alluſion; the other, ſoon after, plunged into the vortex of faſhionable diſſipation. I loſt ſight of her; and I heard that her character ſoon loſt its charms; but that having heard the penſive caſt of countenance and mild retiring manners ſuited her figure beſt, ſhe not unfrequently put on the ſemblance of what ſhe once was, and became affected and ridiculous; for next to the affectation of looking and behaving like a man, which one now ſo frequently ſees, is the pretence to exceſſive ſenſibility. That ſort

" Which would weep o'er the withering leaf of a
" roſe,"

and is tremblingly alive at every pore. But, perhaps, what has given me ſo great an averſion to this, is the circumſtance of my happening to know two women who have it to a ridiculous degree. One, who in company is *ſo* ſoft, *ſo* feminine, *ſo* delicate, *ſo* gentle, that ſhe can hardly prevail

prevail upon herſelf to ſpeak ſo as to be heard acroſs the room, fairly broke her huſband's heart, from the violence and acrimony of her temper. The other, has tears at command; will enact a perfect Niobe, if her dear worthy friend is under any affliction; but, amidſt her conſolatory tenderneſs, will aſk the friend, if it be loſs of fortune he deplores; whether, poor good man! he does not think now, in his cooler moments, that he owes his misfortune a *little* (honeſt worthy ſoul!) to his own trifling overſights and indiſcretions. If her friend laments the death of a child, this ſympathizing dear affectionate woman will mingle her tears with the mourner, aye a fountain full; but, in the midſt of pumping them up, ſhe will gently hint to the agonized mother, that the poor dear baby that's gone, was, poor thing! never, in *her* opinion, very healthy, and ſhe rather fears was badly nurſed, and ſomewhat neglected, and expoſed too much to cold air, which might undermine, dear precious thing! its little delicate conſtitution.

To

To ſuch a woman as this, I have frequently been tempted to ſay, If this is your tenderneſs and your friendſhip, for Heaven's ſake give me rudeneſs and enmity.

Caroline. Oh! I know ſuch people. But tell me, aunt, who was your Miranda? I cannot help being ſorry ſhe altered ſo much.

Mrs. Woodfield. No matter who ſhe was; ſhe is no longer the ſame perſon. But here is the Abbé Bernard coming acroſs the meadow, we muſt go in.

Caroline. Do you know, aunt, he thinks, that in a very few leſſons more I ſhall be able to read the different Italian poets, as well as I now do Goldoni's comedies.

Mrs. Woodfield. I am very glad to hear it; for of all thoſe acquirements that are called accompliſhments, there is none that, were I now a young perſon, would excite my ambition ſo much as the acquiſition of languages. It not only makes a perſon uſeful on a thouſand occaſions, but enlarges their minds, and goes a great

a great way towards curing them of narrow and diſgraceful prejudices. If ever we ſhould go to Italy——

Caroline. To Italy!—Oh! my dear aunt, have you really thoughts of going thither?

Mrs. Woodfield. Yes; I aſſure you I have often very ſerious thoughts of it.

Caroline. And ſhould I go with you?

Mrs. Woodfield. Certainly, my dear Caroline; if your father continues to entruſt you with me, wherever *I* go *you* ſhall go. But do you think yourſelf well qualified for a traveller? To travel too, with perons whoſe finances will not allow them to enjoy all thoſe advantages that obviate the inconveniencies of travelling?

Caroline. Dear aunt, why ſhould you ſuſpect me of being leſs able to ſubmit to theſe difficulties than any other perſon? You know I was once in France with my mamma.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. You were then a child; and children, while they are amuſed by variety, are unconſcious of difficulties. But what makes me believe you now would leſs eaſily ſubmit to them is, that you are naturally faſtidious; this place is cold, and another place is hot; here one is dull, and there one is plagued with *boring* people; you are afraid in bad roads, and impatient at inns. Now all theſe diſagreeable things, and probably many others, yet more diſagreeable, would occur to you between England and Rome.

Caroline. Oh! but the delight of ſeeing different places, and pictures and ſtatues that one reads ſo much about! Beſides, it is ſuch an advantage, and gives one *ſuch an air*, to have it to ſay, when one returns, that one has been at Rome!

Mrs. Woodfield. And it is preciſely that *air* I ſhould fear your aſſuming, for nothing is half ſo abſurd and diſguſting. A travelled man, who tells you of himſelf and his travels, is only ſecond in tiring his audience.

audience, to him who tells of his wiſdom and œconomy at home. Recollect how Mr. D. whom we uſed often to meet at Sir J. E——'s incurred ridicule, by beginning, on all occaſions, "I remember when I was abroad;" or, "That puts me in mind when I was at Rome." But if it be tireſome and offenſive in a man, it is much worſe in a young woman. And I do not know that any affectation ever diſpleaſed me more, than that of two girls, the daughters of a naval officer, who having been four or five years on the Continent, to finiſh as it is called their education, not only affected foreign manners on their return, but declared, that they found it extremely difficult to accuſtom themſelves to converſe in "the vulgar language of the Engliſh." This folly is happily expoſed by Lord Cheſterfield in one of his papers of "the World."

Henrietta. Mamma, only look at the lilacs, the double bloſſom peaches, double bloſſom cherries, and theſe ſhrubs with yellow bloſſoms.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. Scorpion ſiennas. Or do you mean the bloſſom of the barberry; or the long ſtreaming taſſels of the laburnum?

Henrietta. All, I believe, I mean; for there they are all. Oh, how lovely the ſhrubbry is! What ſhould any body want to go out of England for, when every thing is ſo ſweet and delicious!

Mrs. Woodfield. Alas! little girl, one cannot always walk in a ſhrubbery, either in England or any other country; and if one could, they are not always ſo pleaſant as at this ſeaſon.

But that puts me in mind to aſk if you have learned thoſe lines I gave you yeſterday, ſo well deſcribing the beauty of a ſhrubbery, and which you omitted ſaying this morning.

Henrietta. Indeed, Mamma, I have learned them ſince I have been out; and you will ſay I can give you the catalogue of ſhrubs, as correct as Elizabeth gave hers of flowers.

——" Laburnum*, rich
" In ſtreaming gold; ſyringa, ivory pure;
" The ſcentleſs and the ſcented roſe †; this red,
" And of an humbler growth, the other tall,
" And throwing up into the darkeſt gloom
" Of neighb'ring cypreſs, or more ſable yew,
" Her ſilver globes, light as the foamy ſurf
" That the wind ſevers from the broken wave;
" The lilac, various in array, now white,
" Now ſanguine, and her beauteous head now ſet
" With purple ſpikes pyramidal, as if
" Studious of ornament, yet unreſolv'd
" What hue ſhe moſt approv'd, ſhe choſe them all;
" Copious of flowers the woodbine, pale and wan,
" But well compenſating her ſickly looks
" With never-cloying odours; early and late
" Hypericum all bloom, ſo thick a ſwarm
" Of flowers, like flies, cloathing her tender rods,
" That ſcarce a leaf appears; mezerian too,
" Though leafleſs, well attir'd and thick beſet
" With bluſhing wreaths inveſting every ſpray;
" Althea with the purple eye: the broom,
" Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,
" Her bloſſoms; and, luxuriant above all,
" The jaſmine, throwing wide her elegant ſweets,
" The deep dark green of whoſe unvarniſh'd leaf
" Makes more conſpicuous, and illumines more
" The bright profuſion of her ſcatter'd ſtars."

* The taſh.

† The guelder roſe, a viburnam.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. Very well, Henrietta. You have repeated it extremely properly, not only with "*good emphaſis and diſcretion,*" but as if you underſtood it.

And now, to continue my pleaſure, let us acquit ourſelves well in our leſſons from the good Abbé; and to complete my ſatisfaction, as ſoon as we have done that, you ſhall ſing together, while Caroline plays the accompanyment *part* of that beautiful little ode to the May, from the botanic garden of Dr. Darwin.

"Born in yon blaze of orient ſky,
"Sweet May! thy radiant form unfold;
"Unclоſe thy blue voluptuous eye,
"And wave thy ſhadowy locks of gold.

"For thee, the fragrant zephyrs blow,
"For thee, deſcend the ſunny ſhower;
"The rills in ſofter murmurs flow,
"And brighter bloſſoms gem the bower.

"Warm with new life, the glittering throngs,
"On quivering fin and ruſtling wing,
"Delighted join their votive ſongs,
"And hail thee—Goddeſs of the Spring."

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE VI.

MISS HARLEY.

Mrs. Woodfield.

FROM the breakfaſt-table this morning, my dear girls, we will go into Wolfs Wood. Nothing can, in my opinion, be more delightful than a wood at this time of year, when the trees are all in leaf, and clad in their early verdure.

Elizabeth. But, mamma, why do they call it Wolfs Wood? It is enough to make one afraid, if one did not know that there are no wolves in England.

Mrs. Woodfield. You would not have reaſon to be afraid though the wood were in France, where there *are* wolves.

Henrietta. You mean wicked men, mamma.

Mrs. Woodfield. Of thoſe, unhappily, there are now enough; men to whom wolves, if they could underſtand the compariſon,

compariſon, might be ſhocked to be compared. But it is not of figurative but of real wolves that I now ſpeak.

Henrietta. But, mamma, they eat people, do they not?

Mrs. Woodfield. You remember, probably, that one of them eat little Red Riding Hood, after a dialogue of ſome length?

Henrietta. Mamma, now; that is merely laughing at me.

Mrs. Woodfield. Well then; to anſwer you ſeriouſly, my little girl, I will tell you all I know of this terrific ſubject. There are wolves in every part of France; but in the northern Provinces they are few in number, and feeble. I have heard, that unleſs they are hungry enough to aſſociate in troops, which never happens but in very ſevere ſeaſons, (and, I ſuſpect, very rarely even then,) they are eaſily frightened from their attacks on the fold, by a girl or an old woman. The ſhepherds, however, of Normandy, inſtead of

of having ſtationary huts, ſuch as we were in the other day on the hill, having little moveable hovels, ſomething like a thatched cart, which they wheel about with them as a ſhelter from the weather, when they are obliged to remain in places where they apprehend miſchief from theſe ugly animals; a proof that ſuch animals are ſometimes troubleſome. The uneducated in all countries are alike; they love the marvellous, and are ſtimulated by the gloomy, the horrible, and the improbable: And it is to that ſpirit I imputed a ſtory I heard at Rouen, in the ſevere winter, the end of 1784, and beginning of 1785; when I was told, a wolf or wolves had devoured a centinel on his poſt in one of the fauxbourg, and left nothing but his muſket and his breaſt-plate.

Caroline. But if you were there at the time, aunt, I ſhould ſuppoſe you might have found out the truth of ſuch a ſtory.

Mrs. Woodfield. My dear Caroline, you will know, when you have lived and

obſerved a little longer, that nothing is ſo difficult to obtain as truth. If any uncommon circumſtance were to happen at the end of this village, I am convinced that ſix different people would tell it ſix different ways. I never therefore expect, even in this country, to hear a thing related exactly as it happened. In another country this becomes ſo difficult, that I doubt every thing I hear; and if news is to be brought *from* that country to *this*, I know it is more than probable, that the event it relates has never happened at all.

Elizabeth. But tell me, mamma, what is the uſe of telling ſuch falſehoods? what *motives* can people have?

Mrs. Woodfield. It is impoſſible to tell all their motives; but ſome falſehoods are repeated, only by the want of power in thoſe who relate them to diſtinguiſh the truth. Others tell lies, only to give themſelves a momentary conſequence.—"Bleſs me, Sir! why I was by at the time, Sir!—I was not half a yard from the place.—You have heard the ſtory wrong, Sir, for thus

thus it was—I was an eye-witneſs of the whole."—His gaping audience ſwallow with avidity the ſtory of a man who aſſerts a thing ſo poſitively; and then each, proud of having a miraculous hiſtory on ſuch good authority, goes away and relates it after his own manner, till the original fact is loſt in the obſcurity of innumerable miſrepreſentations.—But come, our tranſition from wolves to falſehoods muſt not detain us any longer from our walk; and I believe we may very ſafely venture into Wolfs Wood, ſecure that there has probably been no animal of that ſpecies in it ſince the reign of Edward the Firſt.

Henrietta. I am very much obliged to Edward the Firſt, I am ſure; for, if he had not made people catch them and kill them all, I ſhould have been frightened to death to have gone out of doors.

Mrs. Woodfeld. Now we are all ready, loves; which way ſhall we go?

Henrietta. Under the elm row, to the corner of the down, is the pleaſanteſt, mamma.

Mrs. Woodfield. I believe it is.

[They go out.]

Mrs. Woodfield. See how Henrietta is exploring the hedge-rows for flowers. Oh! ſhe has found ſome treaſure already!

Henrietta. Mamma, I have found ſuch an odd and pretty flower, and ſo ſweet—ſweet as an orange bloſſom—Do tell me the name of it?

Mrs. Woodfield. This is the white ſweet ſmelling orchis; and is of the ſame genus of plants as thoſe purple ones you gathered ſome days ago, and the paler lilac-coloured one, marked ſo beautifully with brown and black lines, which you found in the meadow this morning. If you look upon the down among the ſhort turf, and on the chalky ſoil, you will find the orchis, whoſe flower reſembles a bee, and another that repreſents a fly. Oh! Henrietta is

fled

ſled after them already; ſhe will certainly be a botaniſt!

Caroline. I hope ſhe won't torment all the world with her knowledge, as Mrs. Tanſy does; who has been reading botanical books, till ſhe fancies herſelf able to talk of ſuch things to every body, and worries one with ſomething about petals, and ſtyles, and filaments, and I know not what jargon.

Mrs. Woodfield. It would not be jargon if ſhe underſtood it herſelf, and addreſſed her converſation to thoſe who underſtood it too; but, unhappily, neither of theſe is the caſe. She talks, as many other people do, in the hope of being thought wiſe; but of thoſe to whom ſhe happens to addreſs herſelf, ſome ſuſpect that ſhe is mad, and all are ſure that ſhe is tireſome. It is merely a proof, however, that the poor woman has no judgment in converſation, but ſhe is therefore happier, when, driven back to her ſolitude, ſhe can piddle about in her garden, and fancy ſhe ſhall appear in print as a correſpondent to a botanical ſociety;

ſociety; for it happens, that her "love of fame" has taken this turn; and none at leaſt can be more innocent: For my own part, I feel ſuch a diſpoſition to become an enthuſiaſt in the ſame purſuit, that I am under the neceſſity of checking myſelf very frequently, and remembering how many other things I have to do, more material than conſidering of what genus a flower is, and what are its characters.

Caroline. For, after all, aunt, what does it ſignify, you know?

Mrs. Woodfield. But the inquiry, dear Caroline, is a great deal more innocent, than an enquiry into the characters of our neighbours.

Caroline. Now, if I might venture to contradict you, aunt, I ſhould certainly obſerve, that whether the characters of a plant make it belong to this family or that family, it does not ſignify, if it looks pretty, or ſmells ſweet in our gardens; but if we do not inquire into the characters of our neighbours,

neighbours, we may get acquainted with diſagreeable or dangerous people.

Mrs. Woodfield. Your remark is not without ſome ſenſe in it; but what I mean by inquiries into the characters of our neighbours is, the goſſiping of thoſe prying impertinent people, who neglect their own affairs to buſy themſelves with thoſe of every body around them. The ſpirit that prompts Mrs. Brittlecup to ſet her maid, Nanny, to watch at the garret window who viſits her oppoſite neighbour Mrs. Tinkettle; makes her aſk the butcher's boy what meat he carried that day to Mr. Such-a-one's; and if he knows who is to dine there; ſets people to collect the prices of their acquaintances clothes, and then bleſs themſelves "at ſome folks good fortune, in being able to afford ſuch things."

Caroline. What horrible people, my dear aunt, you have collected!

Mrs. Woodfield. Unhappily for the peace, as well as the pleaſure of ſociety, I have not gone far for my collection; they abound in

in every neighbourhood, and are to be met with among the great vulgar as well as the ſmall. Is it not much better to talk of rhododendrons and toxicodrendrons, meriſpernum and œnothuas, and other hard-named plants, with which our good friend Mrs. Tanſy pains the ears of her leſs enlightened audience.

Elizabeth. Certainly, mamma—my couſin muſt allow that.

Mrs. Woodfield. Nay, it is better than much other converſation; ſuch as that of people who give you a circumſtantial account of all their ailments; tell you what year they felt the firſt ſymptoms of the aſthma or rheumatiſm, and by what accident it was occaſioned; give you a liſt of the remedies they have tried, and the names of phyſicians who preſcribed them. It is better than the talk of a notable buſtling body who boaſts to you of *her* œconomy, and tells you how you might mend your own: or of one who deals in dreams and omens;

" Talks

" Talks all the nonſenſe you can think of;
" Tells you how Jackey had the chin-cough;
" How Jowler bark'd; and what a fright
" She had with dreams the other night."

Oh, believe me, ſuch converſation as Mrs. Tanſy's is an abſolute treat to me, compared with all theſe. Beſides, though ſhe does not know quite ſo much of the matter as ſhe fancies ſhe does, ſhe knows enough to inſtruct in ſome plain and ſimple matters. For example, Caroline, ſhe could tell you, what I do not believe you know, the names of thoſe beautiful trees under which we are going to walk.

Caroline. Indeed I do know, they are almoſt all beech trees.

Mrs. Woodfield. Pardon me; round the borders of the wood there are many other ſorts. But come, our conſtant companion Cowper will give us the beſt liſt of theſe majeſtic plants, with their various attributes. I have the volume in my work-bag, and we will ſeat ourſelves on this fallen tree, and refer to it:

" Nor

" Nor leſs attractive is the woodland ſcene,
" Diverſified with trees of every growth,
" Alike, yet various. Here the grey ſmooth
" trunks
" Of aſh, or lime, or beech diſtinctly ſhine
" Within the twilight of their diſtant ſhades;
" There, loſt behind a riſing ground, the wood
" Seems ſunk, and ſhorten'd to its topmoſt
" boughs,
" No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
" Though each its hue peculiar; paler ſome,
" And of a wanniſh grey: The willow ſuch,
" And poplar, that with ſilver lines his leaf,
" And aſh, far ſtretching his umbrageous arm;
" Of deeper green the elm; and deeper ſtill,
" Lord of the woods, the long ſurviving oak.
" Some gloſſy-leaved, and ſhining in the ſun,
" The maple and the beech of oily nuts
" Prolific, and the lime, at dewy eve,
" Diffuſing odours: nor unnoted paſs
" The ſycamore, capricious in attire,
" Now green, now tawney, and, ere Autumn
" yet
" Have chang'd the woods, in ſcarlet honours
" bright."

Many remain, however, which the poet has omitted to mention; ſuch as, the plain, the linden, the aſpen, (though that is indeed a poplar,) the horſe cheſnut,

than

than which no tree is more beautiful at this ſeaſon; the Spaniſh cheſnut, which, when it is in perfection, exceeds, in majeſty and beauty of foliage, every tree of the foreſt; and the walnut, ſo uſeful for furniture, though leſs beautiful than many others, on account of its coming ſo late into leaf, and loſing the leaves on almoſt the firſt froſt.

Caroline. There are ſo many of them, that I think I ſhould never recollect them all.

Mrs. Woodfield. That is merely for want of a little obſervation, to which, however, as a ſtudent in landſcape, you ought to accuſtom yourſelf. How monotonous and unintereſting is a payſage in which there are no variety of trees; or which contains only ſuch as reſemble the diſfigured broom-ſhaped elms that one ſees about London.

Henrietta. Mamma, thereis a man, and two or three of the oddeſt looking little dogs with him, that ſeem to be hunting about

about for ſomething; I am afraid they are going to kill thoſe ſweet little ſquirrels that are leaping about ſo happy among the boughs.

Mrs. Woodfield. No, Henrietta, it is a truffle-hunter.

Elizabeth. What is a truffle?

Mrs. Woodfield. A fungus—ſomewhat reſembling a muſhroom, but darker, heavier, and more compact. It grows beneath the ground, in the hollows formed by the roots of trees, particularly beech trees, and thoſe odd little mop-headed dogs have the faculty of finding where there are truffles by their ſmell.

Henrietta. Aſk the man to let us look at them, mamma. Dear, what ugly looking lumps! What are they good for?

Mrs. Woodfield. To eat. Sometimes they are boiled, and ſent in a napkin to table like roaſted potatoes; at other times dried on a ſtring, and uſed in made diſhes.

[A Servant

[A Servant comes up.]

Servant. Madam, here are ſome ladies come to pay you a viſit: I told them you were not at home, being walked out with the young ladies; but, as they ſeemed to have come from ſome diſtance, I deſired them to come in and have ſome refreſhment, and I thought it was better to let you know.

Mrs. Woodfield. You have done extremely right—What are the ladies names?

Servant. I only know one of them, Ma'am; Miſs Harley.

Mrs. Woodfield. Haſten back, and aſſure them I am coming immediately, and let Ann ſend in chocolate.

Caroline. And is it the ſame young lady you ſpoke of, Madam, as being very unfortunate?

Mrs. Woodfield. It is the ſame; and during our evening walk, I will give you her little melancholy hiſtory.

EVENING.

Mrs. Woodfield. Miſs Harley is of a very good family. Her father, though a younger brother, was poſſeſſed of a very conſiderable fortune in one of the Weſt India Iſlands, whither he went at ſeventeen or eighteen years of age, being invited over by an uncle who poſſeſſed a large and flouriſhing plantation, and who promiſed to make him his heir. He married, by the deſire of his uncle, a young woman of fortune, as was then ſuppoſed, who, having been educated in England, was ſent for back to be united to him, though they had never ſeen each other before. Miſs Harley was their only child. The uncle died when ſhe was about twelve months old; and her parents equally impatient to enjoy their affluent fortune in England, came over immediately, leaving their property to the care of agents. They lived in London, and at an eſtate they purchaſed in Hampſhire, in very great ſplendour, and even profuſion.

Miſs

Miſs Harley had the beſt education that could be given her; and every expence was laviſhed on her, as the heireſs of a man ſo affluent. At ſixteen or ſeventeen ſhe had many lovers; attracted rather by the reputation of her great fortune than her beauty, though ſhe was then, I have heard, extremely pretty. Her father, who was proud and ambitious, choſe for her, among this train of admirers, a young nobleman, whoſe family was better than his fortune; but it happened that ſhe liked him; and, contrary to what generally happens in ſuch caſes, he was the man ſhe would have preferred, had ſhe had the power to chuſe. Every preparation was making in the moſt ſplendid ſtyle for their marriage. It was obſerved that Mr. Harley was ſometimes unuſually low, and appeared at other times in flurried and unſettled ſpirits. He often complained of a pain in his head; and, under the pretence that it was made worſe by company, he ſhut himſelf up in his room for many hours at a time. His own family, and his friends, who were much

much about him, remarked this change in his manner with much ſurpriſe; but they imputed it in a great meaſure to the anxiety a parent muſt feel, who was ſo ſoon to fix the fate of an only and beloved child.

The day came when the ſettlements were to be ſigned; the jewels, equipages, and houſe were ready; and the next day ſave one, was fixed for the celebration of the nuptials. Mr. Harley, who had agreed by the deeds of ſettlement to give his daughter an immenſe fortune, ſigned them with a trembling hand: But he ſeemed ſoon after to regain his ſerenity, dined with a large party of friends, and went out in the evening at his uſual hour. When he came back, Mrs. Harley and the intended bride were gone to make viſits. They returned, with the intended bridegroom, to ſupper. Mr. Harley's valet de chambre was ſent to inform him they waited for him. He found him dead, and too evidently by his own hand. The man, in the extreme terror which aſſailed him on ſuch a ſpectacle, had yet ſo much preſence

preſence of mind as to call up the houſe-keeper, and conſult with her on the means of diſcovering to the wife and daughter this dreadful event, but, in deſpite of all his precaution, they were too ſoon apprized of it. The ſcene that followed may be imagined, but cannot be deſcribed.

On his table, the unhappy man had left a paper, containing a few lines, to this effect: "Imprudence and infatuation on "my part, and the villainy of others, have "combined to ſtrip me of all my property. "I am a beggar, and I cannot ſurvive my "diſgrace. I meditated to marry my poor "injured Eleanor to Lord H. before this "ſhould be known; but I ſhould then but "injure them both more irreparably. I "recommend to my very unfortunate wife "to retire, with our dear wronged girl, to "ſome cheap part of the country, where "her jointure, if indeed there is not a flaw "in it, may enable her ſtill to live, in ſome "meaſure, as ſhe has been accuſtomed to "do. I recommend her and my daughter "to the protection of my brother, and "the kindneſs of my family!"

Poor

Poor Eleanor thought, as ſoon as ſhe was in a condition to make any obſervations, that her lover had entirely changed his intentions. The affairs of Mr. Harley were found even in greater confuſion than he had repreſented. The creditors had put their claims into the management of an attorney, who, having been the confidential lawyer of the unfortunate Harley, knew of the flaw in his widow's ſettlement, and was the firſt to point it out to them. Mrs. Harley was deprived of every thing but about two hundred a-year, on which ſhe prepared to retire into the north of England; Lord H. having, immediately after Mr. Harley's death, taken leave of Miſs Harley for ever, with hardly an affectation of concern. She had loved him, and this ſeemed the moſt bitter of all her ſorrows.

But they were not yet complete. Her mother, unable to bear ſo cruel a reverſe of fortune, ſunk into the grave; and Eleanor became abſolutely deſtitute, and dependent on the bounty of her uncle. This uncle had an only ſon and two daughters. The ſon died

died of a fever in Italy, by which means the daughters became very large fortunes. Lord H. whoſe purpoſe it was to ally himſelf to fortune, addreſſed the elder, and was accepted; and the unfortunate Eleanor ſaw the jewels that had been preſented to her, (which were of courſe returned,) the equipages, and all the luxuries ſhe was to have poſſeſſed, now her couſin's, a young woman without an heart, who had the cruelty to keep Eleanor with her, under pretence of kindneſs, but in reality to inſult *her*, who, but a few weeks before, was an object of envy. Eleanor bore it for ſome time with that ſilent patience which looks like fortitude, but it was the torpor of an exhauſted ſpirit. A violent and dangerous fever had nearly put an end to her miſeries. When ſhe recovered, her noble relations had quitted their houſe in town, and were gone into a diſtant county. They left a cold letter, intimating their hopes of her recovery, and that they ſhould be glad to ſee her on their return. But what was to become of her in the mean time, ſeemed to make

no

no part of their contemplation. It required no great ſtrength of mind to determine to ſubmit any degree of indigence, rather than continue dependent on the bounty of Lady H.; and ſhe reſolved even to embrace a life of ſervitude, rather than again undergo the miſeries ſhe had lately experienced. The pride of her relations would not ſuffer them to let her do this; and one of them, who lives in this neighbourhood, has taken her now for two or three years, and, I believe, behaves not unkindly to her. But dependence, to a perſon who has been brought up to proſpects ſo very different, cannot fail of being very painful; and I think, that it is ſo to poor Miſs Harley, may be read in her languid and dejected countenance; though, within this laſt year, ſhe has made many efforts to conquer the deep deſpondence in which ſhe has ſo long been ſunk. She now rides out, and ſometimes goes into public, though I think the other night was the firſt time I ever ſaw her dance; even then ſhe ſeemed to move mechanically.

cally. Spiritleſs, and loſt to all hope, it is too probable that the ſad compariſon between what ſhe was and what ſhe is, is perpetually recurring to her. Her manners, however, are gentle and intereſting; and, I am told, that ſhe is highly accompliſhed, particularly in muſic, but that it is now extremely diſtreſſing to her to perform; and ſhe has prevailed on the friends ſhe lives with, never to aſk her to play or ſing in company. I have been ſelfiſh enough to regret this, though I would not for the world aſk her to oblige me at the expence of giving her pain; otherwiſe I ſhould have had a melancholy pleaſure in hearing her ſing two or three affecting Italian airs; but more particularly, that little mournful Engliſh poem, Queen Mary's Lament, in which, I have been aſſured, ſhe gives to ſome of the lines a pathos that draws tears from all who know her ſtory.

Caroline. Oh, aunt! I wiſh *I* had never known it.

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth (weeping). And I am very ſorry that I who *did* know it, at leaſt partly, was ſo inconſiderate the other night. I hope ſhe did not think it intentional.

Mrs. Woodfield. Perhaps ſhe hardly remarked it. The petty occurrences of ſociety, which may engage for a little while the idle and the happy, make, I believe, but little impreſſion on a mind abſorbed in its own incurable ſorrows. But, my dear children, we ſhall make one another melancholy, if we purſue this ſubject. It is already later than I was aware of; we will return home by the green lane below. How ſerene is the evening cloſing in! obſerve the planet Veſper; how unuſually bright is that lovely ſtar!

Henrietta. And here are little veſpers, I think. Mamma, I have ſeen ſeven or eight glow-worms this evening

Mrs. Woodfield. It is in theſe graſſy lanes, on moiſt banks, that theſe luminous inſects moſt frequently appear. Do you recollect, my dear girls, how mortified you were laſt

laſt ſummer, when you carried home ſome of theſe brilliant creatures, and found them the next day as ugly and misſhapen inſects as could be ſeen.

Henrietta. I want to underſtand how it is that they ſhine, and what they live upon, and where they go to in the winter.

Mrs. Woodfield. I am not qualified to give you their natural hiſtory; but I will repeat to you an *Ode to the Glow-worm*,* which, though irregular and wild, appears to me to be as beautiful as any little piece of poetry in the Engliſh language: and this I do the more readily, as it is, I believe, inſerted in a work not read by young people:

" Bright ſtranger! welcome to my field,
" Here feed in ſafety, here thy radiance yield;
" To me, oh, nightly be thy ſplendours given;
" Oh! could a wiſh of mine the ſkies command,
" How would I gem the leaf with liberal hand,
" With every ſweeteſt dew of heaven!
" Say—doſt thou kindly light the fairy train
" Amidſt their gambols on the ſtilly plain,
" Hanging thy lamp upon the moiſten'd blade?
" What lamp ſo fit, ſo pure as thine,
" Amidſt

* By Dr. Walcot.

" Amidſt the gentle Elfin band to ſhine,
" And chace the horrors of the miduight ſhade;
" Oh! may no feather'd foe diſturb thy power,
" And with barbarian beak thy life devour!
" Oh! may no ruthleſs torrent of the ſky
" O'erwhelming, force thee from thy dewy ſeat,
" Nor tempeſt tear thee from thy green retreat,
" To bid thee, midſt the humming myriads, die!
" Queen of the inſect world! what leaves delight?
" Of ſuch, theſe willing hands a bower ſhall form,
" To guard thee from the ruſhing rains of night,
" And hide thee from the wild wing of the ſtorm.
" Sweet chiid of ſtillneſs! 'mid the awful calm
" Of pauſing nature, thou art pleaſed to dwell
" In happy ſilence, to enjoy the balm,
" And ſhed, through life, a luſtre round thy cell.
" How different man! the imp of noiſe and ſtrife,
" Who courts the ſtorm that tears and darkens life,
" Bleſt when the paſſions wild his ſoul invade;
" How nobler far to bid the whirlwind ceaſe,
" To taſte, like thee, the luxury of peace,
" And ſhine in ſolitude and ſhade!"

DIALOGUE VII.

THE STRAWBERRY GIRLS.

[Scene—The breakfaſt-room.]

Mrs. Woodfield.

I EXPECT to-day what is quite a treat for me, and will, perhaps, be accompanied with ſomething not leſs welcome to you.

Elizabeth. I gueſs what it is,—new books from London.

Mrs. Woodfield. You have gueſſed rightly.

Elizabeth. And there are ſome for us?

Mrs. Woodfield. Yes; and ſome colours for your couſin and you.

Caroline. I am very much obliged to you. May I aſk what the books are?

Mrs. Woodfield. What would you wiſh them to be?

Caroline. Oh! I ſhall be contented with your choice! But you know that I love poetry.

Mrs. Woodfield. And do not hate novels.

Caroline. I have heard you ſay, my dear aunt, that you did not yourſelf do much otherwiſe, when you were of my age.

Mrs. Woodfield. And preciſely for that reaſon it is that I would not have you read many of them. When I was a girl, I had nobody to direct my reading;

ing; and, being a good deal at a ſolitary houſe in the country, I fell upon all ſorts of books that lay about, and many that nothing but the rage for reading, with which I was devoured, would have tempted a young perſon to look into. By this means I acquired, at a very early age, a great deal of deſultory knowledge; and I was contented without reading novels, for there were none in the houſe I inhabited; and at that time, every little country town had not a circulating library, as they have now. I found, however, exquiſite delight in the little narratives which are ſcattered here and there in the Spectator, Guardian, Tatler, World, Rambler, Adventurer, &c. and I read them with ſuch avidity and intereſt, that I believe I could now repeat every one of them with tolerable correctneſs. Soon after I was eleven years old, I was removed to London, to an houſe where there were no books, and where my whole time was taken up by the attendance of

maſters from morning till night. But I found out by accident a circulating library; and, ſubſcribing out of my own pocket-money, unknown to the relation with whom I lived, I paſſed the hours deſtined to repoſe, in running through all the traſh it contained. My head was full of Sir Charleſes, Sir Edwards, Lord Belmonts, and Colonel Somervilles; while Lady Elizas and Lady Aramintas, with many nymphs of inferior rank, but with names equally *beautiful*, occupied my dreams. My relation ſoon perceived that I was thinking of ſomething very different from my muſic and my arithmetic (for my drawing I never neglected); and a poor ſquirrel and ſome birds I kept were formally accuſed by my maſters, as being the cauſe of my neglect, by occupying great part of my time. I was threatened with the perpetual baniſhment of my unfortunate favourites, if any more complaints were made; and I redoubled my diligence that my menagerie might not ſuffer, nor

nor my ſecret ſtudies be detected. It happened, however, that before I could derive any benefit from this partial reformation, I was caught in my clandeſtine reading, by my aunt, who, having ſent me to practiſe a difficult leſſon on the harpſichord, remarked, for the firſt time, (though the circumſtance had often occurred before,) that ſhe did not hear it. She therefore fancied I was gone to play with my ſquirrel, inſtead of conquering the piece of muſic; and deſcending ſoftly into the room, the door of which was open, and which was juſt oppoſite to the place where I ſat, ſhe found me with my elbows on my knees, and in my lap were three greaſy looking books, on one of which I was ſo intent, that I did not ſee her till ſhe was immediately cloſe to me. I was ſharply queſtioned as to the means by which I came by theſe books, and the ſervant, who had been employed to procure them for me, was ſeverely reproved. My future communication with the

the circulating library was prohibited, and my father was told of my miſdemeanor. Inſtead, however, of being angry, he only told me, that the more I read the better he ſhould be pleaſed; but he wiſhed I would not waſte my time in reading indiſcriminately all ſorts of books, but that I would let him ſee what I was going to read. He blamed me, however, for doing any thing clandeſtinely; and forbade my having any books in future, which were not approved either by him or one of my friends. In conſequence of this, I read, among much other more profitable reading, a great number of novels; and though I certainly did not derive much advantage from them, I think the only harm they did me, was giving me falſe views of life. Almoſt all of them repreſent beings that do not exiſt; and a girl who fancies ſhe is to meet with a Sir Charles Grandiſon, and affects the perfections of a Miſs Byron, would be ridiculous or unhappy. Another fault of theſe books is the conſequence

quence given in them to trifles. The heroines are deſcribed as being elegantly dreſſed, and the heroes wear coats of pale purple cut velvet, on a gold ground. Point ruffles and diamond buckles, and ſuch acquiſitions, are deſcribed among the felicities of the cataſtrophe, when the lovers are married, and all is bliſsful around them.

Caroline. I think nothing in the world ſo tireſome and dull as Sir Charles Grandiſon. There is ſo much bowing upon the ladies hands, ſo much about the cedar parlour, and uncle Selby, and dear grandmamma, that I never could get through it all. Beſides, I know Sir Charles Grandiſon wore a wig.

Mrs Woodfield. Well, if he did?

Elizabeth. Oh! what a fright he muſt have been! Only think of a hero in a wig!

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield (ſmiling) A wig gives you now the moſt ridiculous idea in the world; does it not?

Caroline. One thinks of an old apothecary, or an old clergyman.

Mrs Woodfield. The wigs, however, worn by the fine men when Richardſon wrote, did not reſemble ſuch as now cover the heads of thoſe venerable characters. Don't you recollect what fine flowing flaxen wigs adorn the heads of very young men, and even very little boys, in the great gallery at M— Hall? Nothing gives one a more ridiculous idea of the fluctuation of faſhions, or the falſe taſte of adopting in painting ſuch unnatural modes. Thus, the heroes of novels written fifty years ago, appear to us abſurd caricatures. However, I do not know that there is any evidence of Sir Charles Grandiſon's wearing a wig.

Caroline. Oh! indeed, aunt, he certainly did; for Sir Hargrave Vollexfen wore

wore one, and I dare ſay they both dreſſed equally faſhionable. Beſides, Lovelace complains, in one of his letters, that his wig was wet through while he waited for Clariſſa's letters.

Mrs. Woodfield. Well, Caroline, we will not diſpute on ſo important a point. I find you are minutely well read in theſe books, and you therefore muſt know, that, with all thoſe faults of tedioufneſs and repetition, they contain characters very ſtrongly diſcriminated, and leſſons of the pureſt morality. A great critic has ſaid, that the madneſs of Clementina is the fineſt piece of painting in our language, after the King Lear of Shakeſpear; and though the impoſſible perfection of Sir Charles, who ſeems ſo equal to every trial, that we forget to be intereſted about him, is to many readers diſguſting, yet it is not ſurely wrong to paint man as he *ought* to be, ſince there is a chance of inducing him to become, by the ſtudy of ſuch a

character, better than he is. However, we muſt defer any farther diſcuſſion of this matter till another time, for here comes Samuel with the parcels from London.

[CAROLINE and ELIZABETH go out, and return with books and materials for drawing.]

Caroline. Oh, my dear aunt! how much I am obliged to you! What a delightful ſet of crayons, and ſuch a nice painting box, with pallet and all ſo complete!

Mrs. Woodfield. I am glad you are pleaſed, my dear Caroline. It is an ample return to me, when I ſee that you are intereſted; but, however, you ſhall make me another repayment.

Caroline. To be ſure I will, moſt readily.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. You ſhall ſuperintend the leſſons of my little Henrietta in drawing flowers. Here is the book I have purchaſed for her; and when ſhe has practiſed a little in this, ſhe ſhall try to draw flowers from nature, beginning with the moſt ſimple.

Caroline. My dear aunt, you could teach her much better yourſelf.

Mrs. Woodfield. I might teach her as well, perhaps, if I had time to give her; but that, unfortunately, I have not; The neceſſity I am under of writing continually on buſineſs, occupies moſt of thoſe hours which ought to be dedicated to the education of my children. In you, however, Caroline, I have an excellent ſubſtitute in this amuſing and elegant art; and while you inſtruct Henrietta, you will find an acquiſition of knowledge to yourſelf: And beſides that, you will derive a clearer idea of the principles you teach, you will acquire

quire an habit of attention and of patience, uſeful to yourſelf.

Caroline. It is very true that I find myſelf improved in muſic ſince Elizabeth has been my ſcholar.

Mrs. Woodfield. I am afraid thoſe ſtudies will be ſuſpended a day or two, for theſe books will engage us too much to ſuffer us to give our uſual attention to thorough-baſe. Elizabeth ſeems quite abſorbed in what ſhe is reading already.

Elizabeth. It is a narrative ſo intereſting that I happened to open upon!

Mrs. Woodfield. We will, however, leave it for the preſent, or the ſun will be too high before we can reach the woods, where we will take ſome book of poetry to read, and return through the fir-grove on the other ſide the common, to avoid the heat. Take your baſkets with

with you; perhaps we may find ſome ſtrawberries.

[They go out.]

Henrietta. Oh! here are ſtrawberries; already I have found ſeveral bunches! And there a little lower, mamma, among that copſe-wood which has lately been cut, I ſee the ſame poor children gathering them who brought thoſe that you bought at the door yeſterday. Mamma! I think if I gather them it will be robbing thoſe poor children, who get a little money by ſelling them.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is an exquiſite pleaſure to me to ſee you ſo conſiderate, my Henrietta; but you ſhall amuſe yourſelf with picking them, if it *does* amuſe you; then add your *recolte** to theirs, and I will become the purchaſer.

Elizabeth. Theſe are the ſame children we ſaw the other day; and I fancy

* Recolte, gathering, collection.

that

that poor old woman, who is ſitting on one of thoſe faggots, is the grandmother they told us they lived with. One of the little girls is the moſt intereſting creature!

[Mrs. WOODFIELD goes up to the old woman, converſes with her, and makes her a ſmall preſent—ELIZABETH and HENRIETTA gaze at her with a mixture of pity and terror expreſſed in their faces.]

Elizabeth. Dear mamma! what a melancholy ſight is a perſon ſo very old!

Mrs. Woodfield. So very old and ſo very poor;—the ſpectacle is indeed humiliating and painful. Yet this poor old woman, whoſe figure has almoſt loſt the traces of humanity, was the daughter of a rich farmer, and was, as I have heard other women of the neighbourhood relate, a great beauty in her time, and a celebrated horſewoman. When the mind is carried back to thoſe days, it is difficult

difficult to imagine how ſuch a change can have taken place.

Caroline (ſhuddering). I wonder that any perſon ſhould think old age deſirable.

Mrs. Woodfield. Yet we are ſo conſtructed, that evils, which at a diſtance appear ſo inſupportable that death is preferable, approach gradually, and we ſeem not to feel them. If a girl, in the bloom of youth, were ſuddenly to become withered and decrepid, like that very ancient woman, ſhe would probably die in deſpair. But of the moſt celebrated beauties that ever have been ſung in the different ages of the world, ſome have lived to great ages, and

> " To that complexion muſt have come at
> " laſt,"

notwithſtanding all the ſtruggles of expiring vanity; and they have uſually, I believe,

believe, been as much reſigned to their lot, as women who, ſetting out without any remarkable perfections, had leſs to regret of loſſes in the way. It is fortunate, perhaps, that ſelf-love at firſt prevents our being ſenſible of the lamentable change that time makes in the perſon. Thoſe who either have, or fancy they have been poſſeſſed of uncommon advantages, take great pains to hide the decay of thoſe advantages, even when their glaſs compels them to avow the mortifying truth, and will no longer be contradicted by the flattery of their maid. But theſe efforts generally render more conſpicuous the defects they attempt to hide. What is half ſo abſurd, or excites ſo much juſt ridicule, as to ſee a fat woman of five and forty or fifty, with a broad face and a double chin, dreſſed in ſome flimſy gauze dreſs, which might well become the light figure of her youngeſt daughter; with ſtays ſo tight, that ſhe can hardly breathe; flowers in her hair, and a pound of rouge on

on her cheeks? Yet how often do ſuch figures preſent themſelves in publick, and make themſelves objects of laughter and contempt, inſtead of being entitled to our reſpect and regard! Theſe poor gentlewomen do not conſider, that they might be very agreeable women, though they cannot be beauties any longer; and that by pretending to what they are not they loſe all the eſteem which they might engage as what they are, and by ſubmitting, like reaſonable beings, to the inevitable effects of time.

Elizabeth. But it is not for ſuch people as thoſe, I am ſorry; I think one ſees old ladies as happy as young ones; and I am ſure Caroline and I do not enjoy a ball, more than Mrs. Flint and Mrs. Wadford do a game at whiſt. How eager they always are to begin, and how croſs if any body diſturbs them! I am ſure they are quite as happy as girls, eſpecially when they win, and talk the game over afterwards. Mamma, do

do you know I ſhould like, when one of thoſe old ladies is in the midſt of her triumph at wining a rubber, and pocketing her half crowns with ſo much delight, to go up to her, and aſk her to give ſome of her winnings to ſuch a poor old woman as we have juſt ſeen.

Mrs. Woodfield. Elizabeth, the idea is admirable. Tell me now, ſuppoſe the forms of ſociety would allow you to addreſs yourſelf to Mrs. Wadford, for example, a perſon of a very awful preſence, and of no very gentle voice and demeanor, how would you ſet about it?

Elizabeth. I don't think I ſhould be in the leaſt afraid; but I would go up to her and ſay, "Mrs. Wadford, I am glad to ſee you have won a good deal to-night, and I am come to beg ſome of it for a poor old diſtreſſed woman, who is incapable of procuring any of the comforts of life, though her great age makes them

them ſo neceſſary to her. She lives in a miſerable cottage, which does not keep out the weather ;—ſhe has only a few rags inſtead of clothes, and no nouriſhing food ;—ſhe has nobody to help her, for all her children are dead ; and what is yet more diſtreſſing, ſhe has three of her grandchildren, whom the pariſh have ſent to her to take care of, when ſhe had more occaſion to have ſome perſon hired to take care of her ;—ſo my dear Madam, I am ſure you will give her ſomething for a little preſent relief."

Mrs. Woodfield. Well! your pleading would be very good. Now tell me what you think would be Mrs. Wadford's anſwer.

Elizabeth. And you will not be angry, mamma, and ſay I am ſatirical ?

Mrs. Woodfield. No ; I give you leave to repreſent what you think would be her anſwer.

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth. Then I think ſhe would look very red and very croſs, and ſay, "Miſs! I'm really ſurprized at your aſking *me!* Fine times indeed, when little chits are ſo forward, and are taught to dictate about charity! Upon my word Miſs Woodfield, I ſhall take an opportunity of telling your mamma." Then ſhe would have finiſhed reckoning her money, have tied up her purſe carefully, and have put it into her pocket, and perhaps be ſhuffling on her cloak.

Mrs. Woodfield. And would you, Elizabeth, be repulſed ſo eaſily?

Elizabeth. I think I ſhould addreſs her again, and repeat my petition, and perhaps bid her think, that ſhe herſelf is old, and has the gout and the rheumatiſm, which ſhe finds bad enough to bear, even with all manner of comforts about her; how hard then, I would ſay, muſt be the ſufferings of a poor deſolate creature, older and more infirm than

than you are, Ma'am, and who has not the neceſſaries of life?

Mrs. Woodfield. Oh! Elizabeth, you would ſpoil all by repeating that unfortunate word *old.*

Elizabeth. But would it not ſerve her right, mamma?

Mrs. Woodfield. Perhaps it might; but no perſon has a right to intrude upon another with diſagreeable truths. Mrs. Wadford would tell you, that you were a pert girl, and ought to be ſent to ſchool and well whipped; that if people were poor, there was a proviſion made for them by the pariſh; and if girls were encouraged in ſuch impertinence, it would ſoon be impoſſible for any mortal to have *parties*, unleſs ſuch diſagreeable children were excluded. Caroline, do you think Elizabeth's method would ſucceed?

Caroline.

Caroline. Oh! I am ſure it would not.

Mrs. Woodfield. Could you not deviſe a better?

Caroline. I would addreſs to her ſome pathetic piece of poetry; ſuch as,

" Pity the ſorrows of a poor old man;"

or that which I read the other day in the Scottiſh poet, repreſenting the calamities of old age and poverty.

Mrs. Woodfield. I do not exactly recollect what you mean; repeat to me ſome of the verſes that ſtruck you the moſt*.

" The ſun that overhangs yon Moors,
" Out-ſpreading far and wide,
" Where hundreds labour to ſupport
" A haughty lordling's pride;
" I've ſeen yon weary winter ſun
" Twice forty times return,
" And every time has added proofs
" That man was made to mourn.

* Second verſe of "Man was made to mourn" a Dirge, from Burn's Poems.

" Look

" Look not alone on youthful prime,
" Or manhood's active might,
" Man then is uſeful to his kind,
" *Supported* is his right;
" But ſee him on the verge of life,
" With cares and ſorrows worn,
" Then age and want—Oh! ill match'd pair!
" Shew man was made to mourn.

" Many and ſharp the num'rous ills
" Inwoven with our frame,
" More pointed ſtill we make ourſelves,
" Regret, remorſe, and ſhame:
" And man, whoſe heaven-erected face
" The ſmiles of love adorn,
" Man's inhumanity to man
" Makes countleſs thouſands mourn."

Mrs. Woodfield. Alas! my dear girl, neither theſe, nor the moſt affecting verſes that ever were written, would move an heart like that of Mrs. Wadford. We have heard, among the fables of antiquity, that the power of harmony, by which poetry and eloquence have been underſtood,

underſtood, has effected miracles, and moved even the ſavages of the wild; but an inhuman heart, hardened by ſelfiſh policy, is not to be moved; and I would ſooner undertake to mollify the untameable beaſts of the deſert. I believe the human heart is no longer reſponſive to the ſounds of the ſweeteſt meaſures, and that Orpheus himſelf might unite poeſy with muſic in vain; three parts in four of the world "*hear not the voice of* "*the charmer, charm ſhe ever ſo ſweetly.*" On Mrs. Wadford, I am ſure, the pathos of poeſy or of eloquence would be exerted in vain; ſhe would be ſtill as "*the* "*deaf adder*;" for there is only one perſon ſhe loves in the world, and that one is herſelf. Collected thus to a point, her affections are very ſtrong; and it muſt be acknowledged, that if they are not diffuſed they are ardent.

Elizabeth. I always diſliked that woman, ever ſince ſhe beat my little dog, who

who followed us into her odious houſe one day, becauſe ſhe ſuppoſed he would dirt her carpet.

Mrs. Woodfield. Her character is the ſame throughout. I am afraid that your project of affecting her feelings in proſe, or that of Caroline to addreſs her in verſe, would be equally fruitleſs; and we muſt have recourſe to ſome more certain method, if we would do any good to the ancient grandmother of our little Strawberry Girls.

Elizabeth. Mamma, I think that all poets are diſpoſed to be melancholy. What can be more mournful than thoſe verſes Caroline repeated; or than a great number of other poems that are the moſt celebrated, particularly thoſe of Gray?

Mrs. Woodfield. It is a very juſt remark; but the melancholy views given of human life by the poets, are eaſily accounted for. The ſame keenneſs of perception that makes them poets, awakens in them

the warmeſt reliſh for the enjoyments of life, of courſe the moſt poignant feelings of its diſappointments. Tremblingly alive, the common lot of humanity too often appears inſupportable. A man of buſineſs, who is occupied in the acquiſition of money, or in providing the neceſſaries of exiſtence, loſes his miſtreſs or his wife; but he knows that miſtreſſs and wives are mortal: he gives the uſual time to ſorrow, and then returns to the common vocations of his life. But a poet nouriſhes or aſſuages his grief by telling it in harmonious numbers. It is from hence that we fancy poets have a greater ſhare of calamity than other people; whereas, in fact, it is only that they poſſeſs ſuperior powers of deſcription. Certain, however, it is, that in reading the lives of the poets, it appears as if they were an aſſemblage of the moſt unhappy men that could be collected; and ſome, particularly Savage and Otway, are related to have ſuffered the moſt terrible extremes of poverty, even

to

to famine. A later inſtance is that ſingular and unfortunate being, Chatterton.

Caroline. I once looked into his poems; but the language was ſuch as made it impoſſible for me to read them with any pleaſure.

Mrs. Woodfield. Nothing, however, is more eaſy. I have not got a good edition of Chatterton, but I have ſent to order one down; I think you will learn, with a very little attention, to read his imitation of old Engliſh, with at leaſt as much facility as you read the Scottiſh of Burns, though, perhaps, the ſubjects will be leſs agreeable to you.

Elizabeth. But Burns I cannot read, which I have often regretted, ſince you have told me, mamma, that ſome of his poems are ſo pretty.

Mrs. Woodfield. I will read to you one of the moſt intereſting, in Engliſh, ſave only a few words which muſt remain in the original dialect, on account

of the rhyme: Indeed, except *about a dozen* words, it is already Engliſh.

To a MOUNTAIN DAISY, *on turning one down with the plough.*

" Small, modeſt, crimſon-tipped flower,
" Thou'ſt met me in an evil hour;
" For I muſt cruſh, among the ſtoure,
" Thy ſlender ſtem;
" To ſpare thee now, is paſt my power,
" Thou beauteous gem!

" Alas! 'tis not thy neighbour ſweet,
" The bonny lark, companion meek,
" Bending thee 'mong the dewy wheat
" With ſpeckled breaſt,
" When upward ſpringing, blythe to greet
" The purpling Eaſt.

" Cold blew the bitter-biting North
" Upon thy early humble birth,
" Yet cheerfully thou ventureſt forth
" Amid the ſtorm,
" Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
" Thy tender form.

" The ſlaunting flowers our gardens yield,
" High ſheltering woods and walls muſt ſhield;

" But

" But thou, beneath the random bield
" Of clod or ſtone,
" Adorn'ſt the rugged ſtubble field,
" Unſeen—alone.

" There, in thy ſcanty mantle clad,
" Thy ſnowy boſom ſun-ward ſpread,
" Thou lift'ſt thy unaſſuming head
" In humble guiſe,
" But now the ſhare uptears thy bed,
" And low thou lies!

" * Such is the fate of ſimple bard,
" On life's rough ocean luckleſs ſtarr'd,
" Unſkilful he, to note the card
" Of prudent lore,
" The billows rage, and gales blow hard,
" And whelm him o'er!

" Such fate to ſuffering worth is given,
" Who long with *wants and woes* has ſtriven,
" By human *pride* or *cunning* driven
" To miſery's brink,
" Till wrench'd of every ſtay but Heaven,
" He, ruin'd, ſink!

* One verſe is omitted.

Even "

" Even thou who mourn'ſt the Daiſy's fate,
" That fate is thine---no diſtant date,
" Stern Ruin's plough-ſhare drives elate
" Full on thy bloom,
" Till cruſh'd beneath the furrows weight
" Shall be thy doom."

DIALOGUE VIII.

FANNY BENNISON.

It was on a ſultry evening in the month of Auguſt, when the heat having kept her children within the whole day, Mrs. Woodfield accompanied them for a walk to a farm-houſe, with the inhabitants of which ſhe had ſome buſineſs. They paſſed through fields on their way, in ſome of which the wheat was cutting, in others it was already cut, and the leaſers were gathering up the ſcattered ears. Elizabeth looked around for the lovely form of Lavinia, as Thomſon has repreſented her; but no ſuch figure was to be found among the groups of children and old perſons diſperſed about the field. When ſhe

ſaw

ſaw a farmer drive in his herd of hogs before theſe unhappy people had gathered the ſcanty refuſe that was left them; when ſhe ſaw their diſappointment, of which they did not dare to complain, but dejectedly and ſorrowfully left the field, ſhe was not only filled with indignation, but felt diſpoſed to try the experiment, Caroline had talked of, with the card-playing old lady; and to have ſaid,

" Be not too narrow, huſbandman; but fling
" From the full ſheaf, with charitable ſtealth,
" The liberal handful. Think, oh! grateful
" think!
" How good the God of harveſt is to you,
" Who pours abundance o'er your flowing
" fields!
" While theſe unhappy partners of your kind
" Wide hover round you, like the fowls of
" heaven,
" And aſk their humble dole. The various
" turns
" Of fortune ponder; think your ſons may want
" What now, with hard reluctance, faint, ye
" give".

Such

Such were the reflections Elizabeth communicated to her couſin, as, paſſing into another field where the reapers were yet at work, they ſaw the farmer himſelf, an immenſe fat man, without his coat, in a red waiſtcoat, emulating his face, urging his men to exertion, by promiſing them (as he was afraid of a change of weather, and was to finiſh that night) a larger ſhare than uſual of that favourite liquor on which he ſeemed to have fattened. They, none of them, however, appeared to ſerve him with pleaſure, even thus bribed; but executed their taſk, though with alacrity, yet without that delight with which labourers work at the harveſt-home of a good and conſiderate maſter.

The farmer hardly noticed the ladies as they paſſed. On their arrival the houſe, which was a large old faſhioned building, with a court, and cut hollies between the door and the farm-yard, they were received with as much ſtate

by the miſtreſs of the manſion as if ſhe had been the lady of the manor, inſtead of the tenant of the manor-farm. She was ſeated in a great chair in her ample kitchen, with two tall maids, without their gowns, and with blue linſey aprons, waiting on her, while ſhe dealt out the beer for the labourers who were in the field. There was an air of conſequence about her which amazed Caroline, who had imagined a farmer's wife to be a ſimple and civil being. But Mrs. Gooſetray, the dame of this manſion, ſeemed to ſuppoſe herſelf as much better than her viſitors, as ſhe was much richer. Mrs. Woodfield and her family being ſeated, and the little buſineſs of paying for ſome corn and poultry ſhe had bought, being finiſhed, Mrs. Woodfield ſaid, "I wiſhed to have ſeen Mr Gooſetray, as he is overſeer and churchwarden, to have aſked him to allow ſome farther relief to poor old Sarah Hobloun." [It was the grandmother to the little Strawberry Girls of whom ſhe ſpoke.]

Mrs.

Mrs. Goosetray. Relief! more relief for she?—Lord, Ma'am! I wonder you should believe the cant of that artful old jade—she wants for nothing.

Mrs. Woodfield. I don't see how that can well be, Mrs. Goosetray; for the parish allow her no more than three and sixpence a-week.

Mrs. Goosetray. Aye, well! and enough too. I wonder, for my part, what folks would have!—Humph! I'd be glad to know whether we be to keep the paupers to live better than ourſels.

Mrs. Woodfield. No, not to live *better*, good madam, nor ſo well, but certainly to live.

Mrs. Goosetray. Why ſo they do, don't they? There's that old woman have been a more trouble to my maſter than arrow a poor body in our pariſh; for becauſe ſhe have once lived better forſooth,

ſooth, and ad a farm on her own, why ſhe expects to live ſtill as though ſhe was *well to do*. But, as I ſays to my maſter, what is that to we? be we to notice that? and han't we enough to do with paupers, and ſich like, that we be *forced* to do?

Mrs. Woodfield ſeeing it in vain to contend with ignorance and avarice ſo invincible, ſilently determined to ſpeak in favour of the unfortunate poor creature (whom ſhe could not herſelf help to the extent of her wiſhes) to a magiſtrate in the neighbourhood, and was riſing to go, when a young man about eighteen, pale, and to all appearance far gone in a conſumption, opened a door near her, and, without lifting his eyes from ſome papers he held in his hand, advanced ſlowly to the table by which Mrs. Gooſetray ſat, and, putting them down, was retiring, when looking up he ſaw ſome ladies who were ſtrangers,

gers, and, a faint bluſh overſpreading his languid countenance, he retired precipitately the way he came.

Mrs. Woodfield. (ſtruck with the dejection and diſeaſe that he ſeemed to ſuffer under). Is that your ſon, Mrs. Gooſetray?

Mrs. Gooſetray. My ſon, indeed! No, a thank you, Ma'am. I have but one ſon, he as has Fullwood farm, and not quite ſuch a poor-looking ſcaramouch neither as that.

Mrs. Woodfield. I beg your pardon; I had forgot. But this young man ſeems unwell; he is ſome relation of yours, I ſuppoſe.

Mrs. Gooſetray. Relations!—yes, one has always enough of they, as I ſays ſometimes to my huſband. But for my ſhare, if they be no more no profitable than Billy Benniſon and his ſiſter, I had full as lief be without um.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. He has a ſiſter then?

Mrs Goſſetray. Yes, indeed; juſt ſuch a poor mopus for a woman, as this is for a man; but their father was my huſband's brother-in-law; he was a parſon, and comed down here ſome years agon to be curate, and ſo he and one of my maſter's ſiſters made a match on't. He got ſomething of a living; or ſome ſuch thing, in London, and did pretty well, till about two years or ſo agone, and then a died not worth a hundred pounds, and left my maſter's ſiſter with them there two children. The boy had been brought up a ſcollard to be ſure, and the girl to do nothing; ſo what was to be done? Maſter gived a matter of twenty pounds (unknown to me) to put Miſs prentice to a mantua-maker, for her mother died broken hearted, half-a-year or ſo ater the parſon, and the boy went out to write for the lawyers; but they've both been made ſo much of, that now it ſeems they can't bear work

nor

nor confinement, nor I don't know what not I, ſo as her miſtreſs was afraid Fanny would die with her, and Bill he was of no uſe in lawyer Tearſkin's office, bin as he had got a diſorder, I forgot what they calls it, upon his cheſt, by writing ſo much. My maſter, though he's none ſo near a-kin to um neither, agreed (for, as I tells un, a have more money nor wit) to give um the run here of our houſe for country air, and I have made um uſeful; for it is a rule with me to have no more cats than catce mice, as the proverb ſays.

Mrs. Woodfield. And what employments have you found for theſe young people?

Mrs. Gooſetray. Why, firſt and foremoſt, I ſet Madam Fan to make up a brown *pattyſway* ſilk that I've had by me this nine years, and then to mend a pair of ſtays, and new-body and ſleeve my ſtriped cotton, and my yellow and white

white Manchester, and to turn my blue riding habit, which is as good as new, only a little moth-eaten from lying by; and then, as I had no more clothes to busy her upon, I got my quilting frame out, and she have quilted me as beautiful a *laylock* stuff petticoat as you'd wish to lay your eyes upon; and since she've finish'd that, I've set her at a quilt made of pieces as I've been begging and saving these five years; she've almost done it, and I assure you that it will be a good job; and I warrant I could not buy such a quilt for twenty shillings.

Mrs. Woodfield. Indeed she seems not to have been idle; but the young man—how have you found employment for him?

Mrs. Goosetray. Oh! why as to that, we wer'n't at no loss; for, you know, master have had long accounts as steward to young Squire Melfort, who is just coming of age. Master was employed by

by lawyer Trickman, who was a ſort of guardian, and now theſe things were to be ſettled, there was a power of papers, d'ye ſee, to put to rights, for maſter is no great ſcribe; and ſo as there is like to be a law ſuit, it ſeems atween lawyer Trickman and the young Squire, maſter, you ſee, cannot be too careful, and Billy Benniſon is getting all them there matters to right for un.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is very lucky indeed that you have found ſuch employment for both theſe diſtreſſed youngpeople but, perhaps, if their health admit of it, you may not be averſe to their procuring ſome little employment elſewhere. If the young woman will come to me, I will endeavour to find ſome eaſy work in mantua-making for her, and perhaps I may alſo have ſome writing, ſuch as copying of letters and papers on buſineſs, to give to her brother to copy for me.

Mrs.

Mrs. Gooſetray. Oh, Lord! to be ſure; if they can find work while they ſtays with us, why ſo much the better

Mrs. Woodfield. Can I ſpeak to the young perſon, the ſiſter of the gentleman I ſaw?

Mrs. Gooſetray. Gentleman, indeed! God bleſs us all!—Now, Madam, I muſt juſt mention one thing, and that is, that if ſo be as you can find ſome little matter of *employment* for this here boy and girl, that you would not go for to ſay, nor to put in their heads, that they, being born a ſort of gentlefolks, are bad off to work for their living, and *ſich.*

Mrs. Woodfield. No, no, Mrs. Gooſetray; I ſhall ſay nothing to make them diſcontented with their ſituation,—of that be aſſured.

The purpoſe of Mrs. Woodfield was to procure an opportunity of ſpeaking

to theſe unfortunate young people, of whoſe ſituation her converſation with the farmer's wife had given her the moſt deplorable idea. Mrs. Gooſetray now went to the foot of the ſtairs, and, in a loud voice, called, "Fan, Fan! here girl you be wanted: Come down, I ſay, directly." In a few moments, a very young woman appeared, whoſe countenance bore a ſtrong reſemblance to that of the youth; ſhe did not ſeem ſo unhealthy, but the deepeſt dejection was viſible on her countenance. Trembling and pale, ſhe approached her unfeeling relation, at whom ſhe ſeemed to be in the greateſt awe and terror, and who thus ſpoke to her.

Mrs. Gooſetray. Come hither, girl; why what?—ane your feet tied together? I wonder what you're afear'd on. Here's Madam Woodfield thinks ſhe can find ſum-mot for thee to do—doſt hear?

Fanny

Fanny Benniſon (caſting a look of mingled apprehenſion and acknowledgment at Mrs. Woodfield). I am very much obliged to the lady.

Mrs. Woodfield (much intereſted by the modeſt and innocent appearance of the young woman). Perhaps, Miſs Benniſon, you might make it convenient to go home with me this evening. I will have a bed made up for you for the time you remain with me, as I underſtand you are not in perfect health, and it may perhaps fatigue you too much to go to my houſe and return hither every day.

Fanny Benniſon. You are very conſiderate, Madam—but—I am ſure I ſhall be too happy to obtain your encouragement—but only—

Mrs. Gooſetray (angrily). But—and only—and but—Pray, *Miſs*, what does all them airs mean?

Fanny

Fanny Benniſon. It is on account of my brother, Ma'am, that I heſitated. My poor brother *(ſhe burſt into tears)* is ſo very ill, that juſt now, in this buſy time, to be ſure, you cannot ſpare people to do for him, and if I am not by he neglects himſelf; and, as I think he has not long to live, I cannot bear to leave him alone to his melancholy thoughts.

Mrs. Woodfield. I hope he is not ſo bad as your fears repreſent him to be. But if it give you pain, you ſhall not quit him; I will ſend the work hither, and if you will walk with me a little way this evening, I will inform you what I wiſh to have done.

Mrs. Gooſetray. Aye, aye, there, go you along; I ſhall have the kitchen full of the harveſters in a min-nut, and you'll be better out of the way.

There needed little preparation, and Fanny Benniſon, encouraged by the eaſy gentleneſs

gentleneſs of Mrs. Woodfield, and the compaſſionate looks and civil attention of the young people, regained ſome degree of compoſure, as by the light of the harveſt moon, which was now riſen, they took their way by the ſide of the river towards home.

Mrs. Woodfield then drew from the young woman a confeſſion of her ſorrows. "Ah! Madam," ſaid ſhe, "our ſituation is indeed hard, but I will not murmur, for certainly it might have been worſe. While my poor father lived, perhaps we were too delicately brought up for our ſlender expectations. He was ſo fond of us both, poor dear man! and ſo proud of my brother's advancement, while he was able to keep him at Oxford, that he did not love to remember, that if he died we had nothing. His life appeared to be a good one. His friends made him a great many promiſes of preferment, and upon the ſtrength of thoſe expectations, though he

he continued to live with the greateſt œconomy, yet it made him eaſy about the future, and prevented his placing my poor dear brother in ſome other way of life: for after my father died, William had no longer any friends, either to ſupport him at Oxford, or to procure him any fellowſhip, or ſome other proviſion, which my father had hopes of getting for him by their means. It is true, that, notwithſtanding the expence of William's being there, and the education my father beſtowed upon me, my dear parents had ſaved a little money; but the long illneſs of my poor father, who, though only about forty years old, was ſtruck with the palſy many months before we loſt him, and the languiſhing illneſs my dear, dear mother fell into immediately after his death, and which ended in our being deprived of her too, naturally exhauſted their little ſavings —and—*(ſobs here broke her voice)* and when this laſt dear parent was taken from us, we had hardly enough—to bury her by the ſide of my father!"

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. Compoſe yourſelf, my dear Miſs Benniſon; let us try to look forward.

Fanny Benniſon. Do not imagine, Madam, that the change we have experienced effects me for my own ſake. I know the tenderneſs of my parents induced them to bring me up in a higher ſtyle than I had any pretenſions to; but my brother's ſituation breaks my heart; —to ſee all the proſpect his underſtanding and his education opened to him blaſted, and to think that he has not *one* friend to countenance him, not one to ſave him from the ſad drudgery of being a copying clerk, by which he does not earn enough to enable him to exiſt!

Mrs. Woodfield. Come, come, I muſt not have you give way to deſpondence, my young friend; perhaps ſomething may be done for your brother. I aſſure you I am deeply intereſted for you both, but my power individually is nothing; however,

however, I have connexions whom I can, I think, engage in favour of a young man ſo unhappily circumſtanced: But I am much afraid, that while he continues to work as Mrs. Gooſetray repreſents, the country air will not produce ſo favourable a change in his health as might otherwiſe be expected.

Fanny Benniſon (deeply ſighing). I need not ſay to you, Madam, how ill his preſent ſituation muſt agree with a mind like his; under the idea of an obligation beſtowed by Mr. and Mrs. Gooſetray, of which to be ſure we hear a great deal, we both in reality work harder than we did at our reſpective employments in London. But ſtill I wiſh my poor dear William to remain a little longer, and eſpecially during this dreadfully-hot weather; for merely to breathe the air of the country, and to have the advantage of freſh milk, muſt be beneficial. In London, at the office of the lawyer who employs

him, I have never ſeen him lately, without believing that every time I took leave of him would be the laſt that I ſhould ever ſee him. My hope now is, Madam, if you will be ſo very good as to employ and recommend me, that I may be able, dy dint of continual labour, to pay for our board, and to releaſe him from the conſtant toil he now undergoes, which indeed, the doctors ſay, was the cauſe of his illneſs at firſt, by obliging him to ſit ſo much, and to lean with his breaſt againſt a deſk.

Mrs Woodfield. Well, you ſhall not go any farther to-night, leſt you ſhould be late home. Return, and make yourſelf as eaſy as you can, and endeavour to relieve the ſpirits of your brother. I will contrive to ſend for you both to-morrow, and perhaps, by talking with him, I may be better enabled to judge what ſituation will beſt ſuit him.

The poor girl, with an heart ſo overflowing with gratitude that ſhe was unable

able to expreſs its emotion, now took leave; and Mrs. Woodfield, greatly affected by what ſhe had heard, walked penſively along the path, gazing at the water on which the moon-beams fell with undulating luſtre. "And this," ſaid ſhe to herſelf, "this is the end of all the ſolicitude which the father of theſe poor young people gave to their education! So ſink in friendleſs obſcurity, all the hopes that they had been taught to cheriſh of future competence! Alas! how many people are there who periſh unlamented and unknown, for whom the fond heart of parental tenderneſs has throbbed with the moſt flattering expectations!" Tears filled her eyes, as ſhe caſt them on the three girls, who were walking ſlowly before her, as if infected with a portion of her melancholy. She was conſcious of the impropriety of too frequently preſenting to young minds gloomy and diſcouraging proſpects of human life; and ſhe endeavoured to ſhake off the weight that hung

upon her ſpirits, and to give the converſation a more cheerful turn. But efforts to force gaiety, ſeldom or never ſucceed. The queſtions of her niece and her daughters, who all appeared greatly intereſted in the fate of Fanny Benniſon, ſerved rather to increaſe than diſſipate the heavineſs of her ſpirits. Still, however, as the beſt way to counteract the effect, not only of the little mournful ſtory ſhe had liſtened to, but of the general penſiveneſs of the ſcene, added to the languor that follows an hot autumnal day, Mrs. Woodfield told them what ſhe propoſed doing towards the alleviation of thoſe ſorrows for which they all expreſſed ſo much concern. And having at length ſatisfied their earneſt enquiries, ſhe deſired, in order to change the converſation, or at leaſt to give it a turn leſs really painful, that each ſhould repeat ſome little piece of poetry that might lately have ſtruck them enough to engage them to learn it.

After

After a moment's pauſe, Caroline choſe, as moſt accordant to the ſcene, and to her ſtate of mind, the following Sonnet, from thoſe beautiful little pieces of poetry lately publiſhed by Mr Bowles:

" While ſlowly wanders thy ſequeſter'd ſtream,
" Wenſbeck, the moſſy-ſcatter'd rocks among,
" In fancy's ear ſtill making plaintive ſong,
" To the dark woods above, that, waving,
" ſeem
" To bend o'er ſome enchanted ſpot; re-
" mov'd
" From life's vain coil, I liſten to the wind,
" And think I hear meek ſorrow's plaint, re-
" clin'd
" O'er the forſaken tomb of one ſhe lov'd.
" Fair ſcenes! ye lend a pleaſure long un-
" known
" To him who paſſes weary on his way,
" The farewel tear, which now he turns to pay,
" Shall thank you; and whene'er of plea-
" ſures flown,
" His heart ſome long-loſt image would renew,
" Delightful haunts! he will remember you!"

Elizabeth, avowing her inferiority both in choice and manner to her couſin, yet

yet ventured to repeat, ſince her mother would not excuſe her, the following addreſs to the Moon:

" Queen of the ſilver bow! by thy pale beam
" Alone and penſive I delight to ſtray,
" And watch thy ſhadow trembling in the
" ſtream,
" Or mark the fleecy clouds that croſs thy
" way.
" And, while I gaze, thy mild and penſive
" light
" Sheds a ſoft calm upon my troubled
" breaſt;
" And oft I think, fair planet of the night!
" That in thy orb the wretched may have
" reſt.
" The ſufferers of the earth perhaps may go,
" Releas'd by death, to thy benignant
" ſphere,
" And the ſad children of deſpair and woe
" Forget in thee their cup of ſorrw here.
" Ah! that I ſoon may reach thy world ſerene,
" Poor wearied pilgrim in this toiling ſcene!"

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE IX.

THE FISHERMEN.

It was about a month after the laſt converſation before Mrs. Woodfield had completely ſucceeded in placing the two young people, Fanny Benniſon and her brother, in ſituations much more fortunate than ſhe had even hoped to meet with. The young man, whoſe health was eſtabliſhed by the advice of an excellent phyſician whom Mrs. Woodfield had engaged to attend him, was received as ſecretary, by a gentleman who was going to Italy on a voyage of pleaſure and inſtruction, and who wanted an intelligent perſon to accompany and write for him. Fanny was taken

taken by a lady advanced in years to read to her, and attend on her; and Mrs. Woodfield had very ſoon the pleaſure of hearing that both the brother and ſiſter acquitted themſelves ſo much to the ſatisfaction of the two friends to whom ſhe had recommended them, that they ſeemed to have found protectors for the reſt of their lives.

The ſucceſs of her benevolent exertions in favour of the unfortunate, was a balm to the heart of Mrs. Woodfield, and conſoled her for many vexations which ſometimes weighed on her ſpirits. She had lately heard from her brother, Colonel Cecil, who had been wounded in the knee, and there were apprehenſions entertained that he would be lame for life. She had not however told Caroline the whole of her apprehenſions; for ſo much was her character changed by the pains Mrs. Woodfield had taken to teach her to reflect, and by being detached from thoſe ſcenes of thoughtleſs diſſipation that

that had rendered her heart inſenſible by diſtracting her underſtanding, that her temper was now more likely to be injured by extreme ſenſibility than to want it.

Anxiety for a brother ſhe loved, with other domeſtic uneaſineſs, had at length ſo far affected Mrs. Woodfield's health, that it became abſolutely neceſſary for her to follow the advice of a medical friend, and to go for a few weeks to the ſea.

This ſhe more readily complied with, as within five or ſix miles of her houſe was one of thoſe retired bathing-places where invalids find it convenient to reſort, to avoid the expence and noiſe of thoſe that are frequented as much for pleaſure as health.

Thither, therefore, Mrs. Woodfield and her three girls repaired, about the middle of September. The days were

ſhortening, and the yellow hues of autumn already touched the woods they left. In their garden, the moſt beautiful flowers were faded; hardly a few white ſpangles remained on Henrietta's favourite jeſſamine, which grew againſt the parlour window. The roſes, and even the carnations, which had rendered their ſhrubbery and borders ſo gay, were now ſucceeded by the unintereſting Michaelmas daiſy, the broad ſtaring China aſter, the tawdry ſun-flower, or the holyoak; flowers which, like ſome characters in human life, are ſhewy but worthleſs, and that hardly compenſate, by their glaring colours, for the pain they give us in reminding us that they are the laſt in the annual proceſſion of flowers.

The ſea proſpects had all the charms of novelty. The rocks, that bounded the ſhore, were high, and afforded an extenſive horizon. Beneath them was a broad belt of ſhingles—ſtones that nature

nature ſeems to have collected as the beſt defence againſt the incroaching ocean, which continually beats upon them, poliſhing their rugged ſurfaces, and throwing them up in ſteep ridges. The bed of the waves was a hard and level ſand, which, when they ebbed, afforded a dry and delightful walk of ſome miles. It was here that, early on the morning after their arrival, the little party took their walk.

Mrs. Woodfield. Henrietta is as much enraptured with a walk by the ſea ſide, as if it were the firſt ſhe had ever taken.

Caroline. And I am as much captivated with it as if it were entirely new to *me*.

Mrs. Woodfield. It has often been ſaid, that a ſea view is monotonous, and offers nothing but a repetition of the ſame objects, at high or low water; ſmooth in a calm, or roughened by winds.

winds. But I think it has much more variety. What can be more beautiful than thoſe ſhades of purple, blue, and green, mingling inſenſibly with each other, like the ſoft ſhadows of the rainbow, while ſuddenly breaking beyond them is a dark maſs of ſhadow, the reflection of clouds above, and then, as far as the horizon, the moſt dazzling brightneſs. There is hardly an hour that does not preſent ſome new and beautiful appearance; and, ſo little am I wearied with continually looking on the ſea, that it is to me the object of all others the moſt amuſing.

Elizabeth. But I think, mamma, I ſhould like to ſee large ſhips, and different kinds of veſſels.

Mrs. Woodfield. I, on the contrary, am content to ſee them paſs at a diſtance. Wherever large veſſels approach the ſhore, there muſt be a deep harbour, formed by ſome river that empties itſelf into

nto the ſea; ofcourſe the ſhore is muddy, and at low water not only ugly but offenſive. Beſides, I ſhould be ſorry to have this pure air polluted by the ſmell of all thoſe things uſed about ſhipping; and to exchange the chirping of the ſea-ſnipes, or even the harſher cry of the ſea-gulls and cormorants, or the tinkling ſheep-bell we now hear from the downs, for the ſcreams of the horrible women that frequent ſea-ports, the buſtle of ſailors, the noiſe of drawing up anchors, quarrelling, ſwearing, crying, and a thouſand unpleaſant ſounds that are always heard in a port.

Caroline. A fleet is certainly a moſt beautiful ſight.

Mrs. Woodfield. Certainly; the *moſt* beautiful that the ingenuity of man has formed. Yet the ſpectacle of a fleet of forty ſhips of war, which I once ſaw, however magnificent as a ſight, conveyed to my mind only painful ideas. I figured

figured to myſelf how many of thoſe brave thoughtleſs beings, who were now rending the air with ſhouts of triumph proud of the ſplendor of that ſhew of which every one conſidered himſelf as a part, and elate with the grandeur of his country, whoſe ſtrength lies in its navy, would within a few days, perhaps, become mangled carcaſes for the prey of the monſters of the deep, and dye, with their blood, the waves over which they were now ſo gaily bounding; inflicting, at the ſame time, equal evils on an equal or more conſiderable number of human beings, whom they never ſaw before, and with whom they have no manner of quarrel.

Caroline. But, my dear aunt, if every body reaſoned in this manner, there would be no wars.

Mrs. Woodfield. And if there were not?

Caroline.

Caroline. Why then there would be no occaſion for either armies or navies.

Mrs. Woodfield. And what would there be in that to lament?

Caroline. Dear aunt, I don't know. But other nations would fall upon us and deſtroy us if we had neither.

Mrs. Woodfield. Not if all nations would be equally reaſonable, and learn that there is nothing to be obtained by our cutting each other's throats. Good God! when I reflect on the calamities and the expences of war, and the little advantage that has ever been gained by it, I own I am aſtoniſhed at the madneſs of mankind.

Elizabeth. But, mamma, there have always been wars.

Mrs. Woodfield. And one bluſhes, as a human being and as a Chriſtian, to trace thoſe wars to their ſources.

Henrietta.

Henrietta. But, mamma, is it not true that the Engliſh have always been glorious about fighting? Oh! how I like to hear of Edward the Black Prince, and his making the King of France ride by him upon a black poney, and to ſee his picture in your great Hiſtory of England, patting the head of a fierce lion.

Mrs. Woodfield. Really, Henrietta, your ideas of glory are worthy a little amazon, but they are not quite correct. The Black Prince, who, from the character that is given of him, was undoubtedly one of the beſt of our Princes, was ſo far from making his illuſtrious priſoner ride by him upon a black poney, that he himſelf took the poney, (if there was a poney in queſtion,) and gave to the captured King a beautiful horſe, richly caparisoned. The evening after the battle he waited on the King of France at table, and generouſly endeavoured to

to conſole him under his misfortunes; thus attaching to his character, as a man, praiſe infinitely ſuperior to that of a mere conqueror. But, however, Henrietta, whatever paſſion for the glory of your country you have caught from ſtudying your little hiſtories of England, and from looking at the imaginary reſemblance of our Kings in my great Rapin, I aſſure you, that the laurels of Britannia by no means compenſate for her ſcars.

Elizabeth. Mamma, at a geat diſtance I obſerve one, two, three, four, five, ſix, ſeven large ſhips! are they ſhips of war?

Mrs. Woodfield. I am no judge of them, even if I ſaw them nearer; at this diſtance it is impoſſible to diſtinguiſh what they are. Indeed I can but juſt diſcern them with my glaſs: Do they go up or down the Channel?

Caroline.

Caroline. How do you mean, aunt, up or down?

Mrs. Woodfield. Do they go to the Eaſt or the Weſt?

Caroline. Let me conſider which is the Eaſt. Oh! I know; they go to the Eaſt.

Mrs. Woodfield. They are then going up the Channel, and are probably merchant ſhips, under convoy, going to the port of London.

Caroline. Perhaps from the Weſt Indies; for now I ſee eleven or twelve others, ſtill farther off. Ah! how glad muſt the paſſengers be that they are ſo near England! I remember I was, when I only came from France.

Elizabeth. Becauſe you were ſick at ſea, but not becauſe you were glad to leave France.

Caroline

Caroline. But ſtill it is pleaſant to return to one's own country; and I am ſure I ſhould think ſo, were I coming from the Weſt Indies.

Henrietta. Do you know, mamma, I ſaw a very great bird dart down to the water and ſeize a fiſh, which he ſeemed to ſwallow in a moment?

Mrs. Woodfield. It was a cormorant. Thoſe ſea-gulls are fiſhing too; every now and then you ſee them dip into a riſing wave. To what numerous tribes of birds the ſea gives food! If you look along the ſands, you will ſee another ſort of bird, watching, as the tide retires, for ſhrimps, young crabs, and other minute fiſhes, or rather ſea inſects, which the waves leave.

Henrietta. And where do they find trees to build their neſts upon?

Mrs. Woodfield. Do all birds then build on trees?

Henrietta. Yes, I believe ſo.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. You have already forgotten, then, that larks build on the ground, ſwallows under the eaves of houſes, and ſand-martins, as well as ſome other birds, in the holes of rocks or neglected buildings. Sea birds build in the chaſms of the cliffs; ſo do the daws which we hear cawing above our heads; but theſe chuſe only the higheſt chalky rocks, where they hope, but in vain, to be ſecure from the cruel and uſeleſs robberies of man.

Henrietta. Why ſurely, mamma, it is not poſſible for any body to take them from thence.

Mrs. Woodfield. One would believe ſo; but I have often ſhuddered to ſee a party of boys engaged in the perilous exploit of robbing theſe neſts. They faſten a ſtick horizontally to a rope, which two or three of them ſecure to the top of the rock by means of a ſtrong

ſtake

ſtake or an iron crow; one of them gets aſtride on the ſtick, and is let down the ſide of the cliff, to which he clings with his hands and knees; the breaking or giving way of the rope, or one falſe ſtep, would precipitate him many fathoms on a maſs of flints, where he muſt be daſhed into a thouſand pieces. Yet this hazard theſe unthinking creatures incur for a prize ſo worthleſs, that when they have got the miſerable neſtlings, they ſell them to the firſt paſſenger they meet for an halfpenny, or, in defauſt of finding a purchaſer, wring their necks off--but *too* ſtriking a reſemblance has *ſuch* folly to many of the purſuits that engage creatures wiſer then theſe poor fiſhermen's boys!—But remark the porpuſſes; I ſee three of them playing near the boats: I believe we ſhall have a ſtorm this evening; there is every prognoſtic of it on the ſea, beſides the appearance of thoſe fiſh, which always

ways denote it. We had better not go farther, as theſe ſqualls from the ſea, at this time of the year, are ſudden and violent. Elizabeth, can you recollect no deſcription of the ſea which you have read lately?

Elizabeth. I believe I can; it is in Cowper.

Mrs. Woodfield. Repeat it.

" Ocean exhibits, fathomleſs and broad,
" Much of power and majeſty of God;
" He ſwathes about the ſwelling of the deep,
" That ſhines and reſts, as infants ſmile and
" ſleep.
" Vaſt as it is, it anſwers, as it flows,
" The breathings of the lighteſt air that
" blows:
" Curling and whit'ning over all the waſte,
" The riſing waves obey th' increaſing blaſt,
" Abrupt and horrid as the tempeſt roars,
" Thunders and flaſh upon the ſtedfaſt ſhores,
" Till he that rides the whirlwind checks the
" rein,
" Then all the world of waters ſleeps again.

Before

Before they could reach their lodgings the wind roſe, and dark clouds gathered over the ſea, while the tops of the waves began to curl and whiten, as they rolled toward the ſhore; and, as the clouds were ſwiftly driven along, the ſea in ſome places aſſumed a deep green hue, and in others a dull purple; the ſea birds forſook their fiſhing, and flew, ſhrieking, towards their rocky aſylums.

This continued without much increaſe, however, till the ſun ſunk, fiery and half obſcured by brown and purple ſpots and wandering clouds, beneath the horizon, tinging the air with that red and lurid appearance which always foretells violent winds. It was not yet, however, ſo ſtrong but that Mrs. Woodfield and her children determined on taking their ſhort evening's walk. Early in the morning, the fiſhermen of the village, which poſſeſſed only ten or twelve

twelve boats, had gone out in purſuit of herrings and whitings. Before noon, their little veſſels, the white ſails appearing like feathers on the broad blue ſea, had been almoſt inviſible, from the diſtance they had gained; and ſoon afterwards they were out of ſight. The wind was againſt their returning, and as the ſtorm came on, their mothers and wives were aſſembled on the high grounds, in hopes of diſtinguiſhing their returning ſails.

Mrs Woodfield, who, from the converſation of the old men on ſhore, and the anxiety they expreſſed, began to feel very apprehenſive for the mariners of the village, defied the increaſing wind, which now blew almoſt an hurricane, to go to an height above, from whence, with a ſmall teleſcope ſhe had, ſhe was in hopes of diſcovering their diſtant boats; but darkneſs and tempeſt ſcowled over the ſea, and it appeared as if the two elements of fire and water were

were mingling together in dreary confuſion. The women now ſurrounded her, ſome expreſſing their apprehenſions in terms of exaggerated terror, and others endeavouring to appear more courageous, and relating how on ſuch and ſuch a night they were ſure the ſtorm was worſe, and yet no harm came of it.

Being too little verſed in this matter to be able to afford comfort to the anxious group, Mrs. Woodfield and her family retired to their ſmall lodging, but were ſoon alarmed by the increaſing violence of the tempeſt.

Tremendous thunder now ſeemed to rival the fury of the winds; and floods of fire mingled with the rain, that drove in torrents ſo violent, that it ſeemed as if the ſea itſelf were ruſhing on the land. Could the danger of the poor men who were out, and the agonies of the women who belonged to them, have

been a moment diſmiſſed from her mind, there would have been ſomething of ſublime horror in this war of elements. But her ſolicitude for theſe unhappy people ſuffered her not to feel any other ſenſations than terror and pity. The women now endeavoured to hang out lights, that might guide the boats to the landing-place; but ſuch power had the wind, that it was impoſſible, by any contrivance, to prevent their lights going out. In looking towards the ſea, it ſometimes ſeemed itſelf on fire; for the lightning ran along it, and the tops of the white foaming waves appeared to be tinged with flame. Shuddering, and huddling round their mother, the three girls ſat ſilent and pale; and when the hour of repoſe came, intreated that they might ſtill be allowed to remain where they were.

Mrs. Woodfield. And why, my dears? Are you not equally ſafe in your beds?

Are

Are you not equally under the protection of Providence there as here?

Elizabeth. Yes, mamma, certainly; but it is so much better to be all together, and then let what will happen.

Mrs. Woodfield. And to us what should happen?

Caroline. Accidents, you know, sometimes happen by lightning.

Mrs. Woodfield. I allow it; but should such a circumstance occur when we are all together, you know, there would be more chance of our all suffering.

Henrietta (clinging round her mother's neck, and weeping). Oh, mamma! let me then stay with you and my sister and my cousin; for I had a thousand times rather be killed with you and them, than be safe, if any of you were to be hurt.

Mrs. Woodfield. My dear little girl, do not let us torment ourſelves with theſe (I hope) needleſs fears. We are in no danger, I truſt; but what muſt be the condition of thoſe poor men, who, in purſuing the occupation on which their ſubſiſtence depends, are overtaken by this terrible ſtorm? What the ſad ſituation of thoſe that belong to them; of families, whoſe fathers are ſtruggling with the raging element; of wives trembling for their huſbands; of mothers, dreading leſt every wave that they hear thundering againſt the groaning cliffs, may have overwhelmed their ſons, the comforts and ſupports of their declining days.

Henrietta. Oh, my dear mamma! pray do not let us talk of it any more; I cannot bear to think of it, indeed I cannot.

Voices were now heard, clamorouſly declaring that ſome of the boats were approaching, and that the wind was abated.

abated. The rain had now ceaſed; but its continuance would hardly have prevented the whole party from going out to witneſs the ſcene that now preſented itſelf on the beach. The various expreſſions in the countenances of the women, the old men, and the children from ten to thirteen years old, that were collected along the ſhore; their hopes and fears, as the boats appeared, or were for a moment loſt behind the ſwelling waves, ſome flattering themſelves they diſtinguiſhed thoſe who were dear to them, others ſtill deſpairing, would have made the fineſt ſtudy for a painter, who deſired to ſtudy the paſſions. At length the men came on ſhore, though not without great riſk, all but two boats crews, and thoſe to whom they were related heard, in anſwer to their eager inquiries, that they were landed at a little creek about a mile lower down. It was with all the delight of benevolent hearts, that the ſpectators of this ſcene ſaw the content and ſatisfaction

faction which the whole village now expreſſed. The dripping and fatigued fiſhermen returned each to his home, accompanied by their families, ſome among whom were weeping for joy.

The little houſehold of Mrs. Woodfield aſſembled round their fire for a moment before they retired to reſt, and moralized on the ſpectacle they had ſeen.

Caroline. How little the poor women thought of *themſelves*, while they were ſo anxious! though I ſaw ſome of them with little children in their arms, hardly able to ſtand againſt the violence of the wind, and trembling ſo, that they were obliged to hold by the rails on the beach!

Mrs. Woodfield. Why *we*, who were much leſs intereſted, my dear Caroline, were inſenſible of the inconvenience of the

the wind, and even of ſome rain that fell, while we were in anxious expectation of the arrival of the boats. How admirably Shakeſpeare has deſcribed the careleſſneſs of perſonal inconvenience, which is occaſioned by violent grief and anxiety!

—— "When the mind's free,
"The body's delicate; the tempeſt in my mind
"Does from my ſenſes take all feeling elſe,
"But what beats there!"

Elizabeth. I thought of Lear, mamma, when the ſtorm was moſt violent, and remembered thoſe lines:

—— "Things that love night,
"Love not ſuch nights as theſe: the wrathful ſkies
"Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,
"And make them keep their caves; ſince was man,
"Such ſheets of fire, ſuch burſts of horrid thunder,
"Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
"Remember to have heard!"

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. A tempeſt at ſea, though one of the moſt awful and ſublime ſpectacles the world can ſhew, has, I think, been leſs frequently deſcribed in poetry than any other phenomenon of Nature. But, indeed, the unfortunate ſufferers, in ſuch a caſe, are not likely to be in a condition to analiſe their ſenſations, or to remark appearances around them. There is, however, the Shipwreck, by Falconer, which has ſome fine paſſages.

How very correct, in all he deſcribes, is that charming poet, Thomſon! If you recollect what we have remarked to day, you may obſerve how cloſely he has traced the progreſs of the ſtorm:

—— "The cormorant on high
"Wheels from the deep, and ſcreams along
"the land;
"Loud ſhrieks the ſoaring hern, and, with
"wild wing,
"The circling ſea-fowl cleave the flaky clouds;
"Ocean, unequal preſs'd with broken tide.

And

" And blind commotion, heaves; while from
" the ſhore,
" Eat into caverns by the reſtleſs wave,
" And foreſt-ruſtling mountain, comes a voice
" That, ſolemn-ſounding, bids the world pre-
" pare;
" Then iſſues forth the ſtorm, with ſudden
" burſt,
" And hurls the whole precipitated air
" Down in a torrent. On the paſſive main
" Deſcends the etherial force, and, with ſtrong
" guſt,
" Turns from its bottom the diſcolour'd deep,
" Through the black night that ſits immenſe
" around.
" Laſh'd into foam, the fierce-conflicting brine
" Seems o'er a thouſand raging waves to burn;
" Meantime the mountain-billows, to the clouds
" In dreadful tumult ſwell'd, ſurge above ſurge
" Burſt into chaos with tremendous roar,
" And anchor'd navies from their ſtations drive,
" Wild as the winds, acroſs the howling waſte
" Of mighty waters."

DIALOGUE X

THE VISIT.

IT was the middle of October before Mrs. Woodfield returned with her family to her own houſe. Her health was amended, and her ſpirits much cheered, by letters ſhe had received from Colonel Cecil, which informed her that, though he was not worſe, he had found it neceſſary to accept the permiſſion that had been given him to return home, in order to complete his cure; and that as ſoon as he could undertake the journey he ſhould be in London, remain there only as long as was neceſſary to conſult one of his friends, a ſurgeon of great eminence, and

and then haſten to embrace his beloved ſiſter and his Caroline, whom he had never ſeen ſince the death of her mother. Preparations were now joyfully making for his reception; but a fine October admitted of frequent morning walks among the now fading woods and ruſſet fields. Their paths through the copſes were often interrupted by great branches, or whole trees of hazel, that had been torn down for the nuts. It was on remarking this, and ſome other appearances, that the following dialogue paſſed.

Henrietta. I ſuppoſe, mamma, it was in autumn that their wicked uncle turned out thoſe two poor little children to periſh in the woods, as I read in that old ballad.

Mrs. Woodfield. And why do you ſuppoſe ſo.

Henrietta.

Henrietta. Becauſe, you know, they are ſaid to have fed upon blackberries, which are ripe at that time of year; and I ſuppoſe they gathered nuts too in the hedges.

Mrs. Woodfield. I know not that: But have you any other reaſons for believing that it was autumn?

Henrietta. Yes, the robins, that ſing now all day long, ſeem as if they did juſt ſo when they covered the poor little girl and boy with moſs.

Mrs. Woodfield. There certainly is ſomething particularly mournful in the autumnal ſong of the robin. Some poet, I believe Miſs Seward, whoſe deſcriptive poetry is very charming, calls the robin,

"The laſt lone ſongſter of the fading year."

And your idea, my little girl, is probably very juſt, as to the ſeaſon when the orphan

orphan children are ſuppoſed to have been left in the woods, by the half-repentance of the ruffians who had been ordered to murder them; when

" The babes, quite famiſh'd laid them down to
" die."

Elizabeth. Was it not true then, that this happened; becauſe you ſay *ſuppoſed?*

Mrs. Woodfield. It probably did happen, or ſomething like it, on which the ſtory was founded.

Caroline. How is it poſſible that there ever could have been a perſon ſo wicked!

Mrs. Woodfield. Alas! dear Caroline, it is almoſt cruel to give to young minds the fatal information of *how* wicked mankind have been, and are capable of being, ſince this is one of thoſe inſtances where, as

" Igno-

—— " Ignorance is bliſs,
" 'Tis folly to be wiſe ;"

at leaſt, it is humiliating to be wiſe, and takes off that enchanting ingenuouſneſs, that native bloom of the mind which makes young people ſo amiable and intereſting, and which, when once loſt, is never recovered.

At this moment a gun that went off very near them, and which was followed by two more reports, made the whole party haſten out of the coppice with ſome precipitation ; for though the girls had been taught not to affect fears on the ſight or report of fire-arms, (which is a common and diſguſting folly,) yet when they heard the ſhot rattle in the branches immediately over their heads, Mrs. Woodfield thought it was time to retreat. They preſently reached a barley erſh, and were proceeding tranquilly on their walk acroſs the field, when they were overtaken by a gentleman

man of the neighbourhood, with whom Mrs. Woodfield had ſome ſlight acquaintance, and preſented with a leaſh of (three) pheaſants, which were ſhot when they heard the report of the three guns. Mr. Northcote would have ſent his ſervant to the houſe of Mrs. Woodfield, but ſhe, in accepting them, inſiſted on leave to decline giving him that trouble, and bidding each of the girls take one, ſhe thanked him, and they proceeded homeward.

Elizabeth. Oh, what beautiful creatures theſe are!

Henrietta. I am ſure it is a thouſand pities to deſtroy ſuch lovely birds. Ah! poor thing, ſee how this bleeds! Mamma, I am ſurpriſed any body has the heart to kill them.

Mrs. Woodfield. A ſportſman has no more idea of ſparing an animal on account

count of its beauty, than an epicure has of not eating it becauſe of its having been ſplendidly clad before it was roaſted. We are told, that the epicures of Rome reckoned among their greateſt dainties thoſe ſinging birds which we keep on account of the ſweetneſs of their muſic; and that, in one of the enormouſly-expenſive ſuppers given by Lucullus, a diſh was entirely compoſed of the brains of nightingales.

Caroline. What a diſh! Thoſe men, aunt, muſt have been more hateful than thoſe we now call epicures.

Mrs. Woodfield. Nearly the ſame, I believe. Gluttony is an odious vice, and always raiſes contempt and indignation. In the old, it is hateful and diſguſting; but in the young, it always excites, in me at leaſt, ſome degree of abhorrence.

Caroline

Caroline (muſing). There are lines in ſome poem deſcribing a pheaſant, but I cannot recollect them, or where they are.

Mrs. Woodfield. They are in Pope's Windſor Foreſt:

" See! from the brake the whirring pheaſant
" ſprings,
" And mounts exulting on triumphant wings;
" Short is his joy: he feels the fiery wound,
" Flutters in blood, and, panting, beats the
" ground.
" Ah! what avail his gloſſy varying dyes,
" His purple creſt, and ſcarlet circled eyes,
" The vivid green his ſhining plumes unfold,
" His painted wings, and breaſt that flames
" with gold?"

Caroline. How well the bird is deſcribed! But, aunt, I have ſeen, in Lady Mary M—'s menagerie, pheaſants very different from theſe.

Mrs. Woodfield. You have ſeen the painted or gold pheaſant, and the pencil pheaſant;

pheaſant; both ſorts come from the Eaſt-Indies.

Caroline. Theſe, I think, are not leſs beautiful.

Mrs. Woodfield. No: the dazzling colours of the gold pheaſant, which in the ſun are almoſt too bright to look upon, and the delicate pencilling of the white and black pheaſant, are certainly neither of them more elegant than the burniſhed gold and black, the green neck and ſcarlet eye of the male birds in our own country. There is a variety in our woods with a circle of white feathers round the neck, or an horſe-ſhoe-ſhaped ſpot of white partly round it.

Henrietta. Oh! how I ſhould like to have a place all netted over, as there is at Mr. D—'s, to keep pheaſants in, and to collect all ſorts of them.

Mamma,

Mamma, are there more ſorts than thoſe three.

Mrs. Woodfield. I have ſeen the repreſentation of another, which is called the peacock-pheaſant, and which is painted as having the form of a pheaſant, with plumage nearly reſembling that of the peacock.

Elizabeth. If I had a menagerie, I would keep not only pheaſants, but partridges and quails.

Mrs. Woodfield. Oh! you would have an immenſe collection, I have no doubt.

A hare which ſeemed hardly able to drag itſelf along, at this moment came limping out of the hedge they were near, and, only a few yards before them ſtopped, and, turning her long ears to the wind, liſtened; then crawling a few paces, liſtened again, by rearing herſelf on her hind legs. Alas!

" Hot-

"Hot-ſtreaming, up behind her comes again
"Th' inhuman rout."

Five or ſix beagles were now heard bellowing in an adjoining hedge-row. They preſently daſhed through, and the unfortunate object of their purſuit, though ſhe exerted all her little remaining ſtrength, had not ſtaggered an hundred paces before ſhe was overtaken. Henrietta ſhrieked with terror, when ſhe heard the cries of the helpleſs animal, as the dogs ſeized it. In half a ſecond it would have been torn into a thouſand pieces, but a young farmer of the neighbouring village, with loud execrations, and in terms underſtood by the hounds, forced his horſe through the hedge immediately afterwards, and, ſnatching their prey away from the clamorous pack, paunched it, and threw its entrails among them.

The ſurly ruſtic, and two or three companions he had with him, then began

gan to try the hedge-row around the ſame field for another hare; and Mrs. Woodfield, with her family, afraid of their ſucceeding, and not having the leaſt inclination to be *in* at another death, haſtened, by the ſhorteſt path, to regain their home.

They there found ſome unexpected viſitors. The family of an old acquaintance of their deceaſed father, conſiſting of his widow, three daughters, and a ſon, were on their way from a public bathing-place not many miles off, and intending to ſleep at the next poſt town, in order to have an opportunity of ſeeing the magnificent houſe of a nobleman near it the next morning, they had found it convenient to take a paſſing dinner with their former friends.

Mrs. Woodfield, though ſo unexpected an addition was likely to make her family dinner fall very ſhort, did not put herſelf in that fuſs which many notable

notable ladies think neceſſary on theſe occaſions; but calmly making ſuch alteration in her little bill of fare as was poſſible at that hour, ſhe returned to entertain her gueſts.

Mrs. Hammerton, the mother of the family, was one of thoſe good women who are always in a buſtle, either about her own affairs or other people's. Fond of what ſhe called ſociety, that is, people who would play at cards or talk with her, or both, ſhe paſſed her life in public places; lived one ſummer at Tunbridge, the next at Margate, a third at Southampton, amd a fourth at Weymouth; then croſſed to Bath for a month or ſix weeks; and always made it a rule to return to London againſt Parliament met; though what connexion there was between her playing at whiſt in Argyle-ſtreet, and the meeting of Parliament, (with no one member of whom ſhe was connected,) no mortal could ever conjecture. But it ſeems her dear

dear Mr. Hammerton, who had been a Banker, was one ſeſſion in the houſe, and ſo, as ſhe told her friends, ſhe had been *uſed* while he was alive to be guided by the meeting of Parliament, and ſomehow it was become quite habitual. She was a lady who poſſeſſed indeed many of the qualities of a great orator; for ſhe had a loud, ſhrill and powerful voice, a never-ceaſing tongue, and a courageous confidence in her own powers of entertainment, which never ſuffered her to doubt but that her auditors were as well pleaſed to hear as ſhe was to ſpeak.

The firſt compliments between her, her family, and that of her old friend, were no ſooner over, then ſhe thus began:

Mrs. Hammerton. And ſo, my dear creature, here you are ſettled in this ruſtic box! I declare I'm vaſtly glad to ſee you look ſo well *though*; and the two girls

girls are vaſtly grown. I think Eliza beth will be handſome. Everilda, *(addreſſing herſelf to one of her own daughters,)* do you not ſee a reſemblance between Miſs Woodfield and ſomebody you know.

Miſs. Everilda. A reſemblance! Let me ſee: No; I declare I don't recollect any body that . . .

Mrs. Hammerton. She is like her friend Lady Anne; very like her. Well, if ſhe is as amiable, my good Madam, you will have reaſon to bleſs your ſtars; for Lady Anne is abſolutely a perfect character. Her ſiſter, Lady Charlotte, too, is amazingly amiable. A charming family!—But did you hear what happened about a month ago to their broher, Lord Canterdown?

Mrs. Woodfield. I hear very little of lordly adventures here.

Mrs.

Mrs. Hammerton. Oh! but it made ſuch a noiſe! Heavens! the papers were full of it; and, indeed, my dear friend Lady Scoulborough ſaid to me, in the greateſt diſtreſs of mind, *What* I ſhall *do*, my *dear* Mrs. Hammerton, I *know* not; but I *believe* this affair of Canterdown's will abſolutely give me my bilious complaint. Oh! Lady Scoulborough, ſaid I—

[Enter a ſervant, who announces dinner—They paſs into another room, and ſet themſelves at table.]

Mrs. Hammerton. Lady Scoulborough, ſaid I, (for ſhe is the beſt mother and moſt amiable woman in the world) I am ſhock'd to death—(I'll take ſome ſoup. if you pleaſe) ſhock'd to death that your Ladyſhip ſhould be ſo affected; and, for my own part, I declare I am vaſtly ſurprized that you ſhould think my Lord Canterdown to blame. To blame! cried ſhe, all amazement that I ſhould

ſo have miſunderſtood her; not at all, ſaid her Ladyſhip; no, no, that is not my meaning; but—(you ſeem to have excellent mutton here, I ſuppoſe it is down-fed, but what hurts me, my dear Mrs. Hammerton, is that the fellow he has had this quarrel with is ſuch a low creature, that in ſhort it is vaſtly diſgraceful for a man of faſhion to have his name in the ſame paragraph. But, however, that leads me to tell you—I dare ſay you have not heard *that* neither about the two Miſs Hattons; you remember them in London?

Poor Mrs. Woodfield dreading an hiſtory of the two Miſs Hattons, as loud, as long, and as little to the purpoſe as that of Lord Canterdown, endeavoured in vain to change or evade the converſation, which, relating to people ſhe never ſaw, or deſired to ſee, was very irkſome to her. Her gueſt, however, continued to talk, and ſhe compelled herſelf to liſten with all the patience ſhe could

could muſter, comforted by the reflection, that if her puniſhment was ſevere it would be ſhort.

Breath, rather than matter, ſeemed now and then to fail her loquacious gueſt, and then, or when the neceſſary intervals occaſioned by eating occurred, her three daughters, willing to avail themſelves of an opportunity of being relieved from involuntary ſilence, all began to talk together; a circumſtance which, while it amazed Caroline and Henrietta, was rather a conſolation to Mrs. Woodfield, and ſhe ſmiled, as it brought to her recollection an anſwer of Dr. Johnſon's, who, when one of his acquaintance teazed him, by the fooliſh trick parents have, of making their children repeat to ſtrangers what they have learned by heart, cried, "Let the pretty dears repeat it both together, Sir, more noiſe will be made and it will be the ſooner over." At length dinner and coffee were happily ended; the

moon came to her aſſiſtance; and her gueſts, the talkative mamma, the chattering miſſes, and their brother, who did not talk at all, but affected the fine contemplative and contemptuous airs which many modern coxcombs aſſume, departed, to the extreme ſatisfaction of the family they left, who now aſſembled round their fire.

Caroline. Oh! thank my ſtars, thoſe good people are gone! I never ſaw ſo diſagreeable a ſet.

Mrs. Woodfield. And yet it was among ſuch ſort of people, dear Caroline, that you lived, when you paſſed your time in London, and among ſcenes which, I dare ſay, you often think of with regret.

Caroline. No, indeed, aunt; what ever I *may* have done, I never now think of London and public places and routs, but to recollect how much I am obliged to

to you for teaching me to find content without them.

Elizabeth. Oh! my coz, if you ever did regret ſuch people as this Mrs. Hammerton, and theſe Miſſes, and this Maſter, what a ſad taſte you muſt have had!

Mrs. Woodfield. Yet my children are to conſider, that *their* not liking this family, is no proof that they are not very agreeable.

Elizabeth. Agreeable, mamma! it is ſurely impoſſible you can think ſo!

Mrs. Woodfield. I may not think ſo, and yet an hundred or a thouſand other people may, and certainly do; for did not the good lady give us a liſt of many very honourable perſons with whom ſhe lives in the greateſt degree of intimacy, and who, I therefore ſuppoſe, and find charms in her converſation, which you little ruſtics cannot diſcover. Inſtead,

ſtead, however, of entering into a too minute criticiſm on the failings, real or imaginary, of the perſons we have ſeen, let us learn to avoid what ſtrikes us as being ſo unpleaſant in them, and let us never fall into that very common error of talking to people on ſubjects that cannot either intereſt or amuſe them. When Mrs. Hammerton tells me a long ſtory of Lady This and Lord That, ſhe knows that I am not acquainted with them, and that it is impoſſible I can care about their inſignificant adventures; but ſhe hopes to impreſs me with high ideas of her conſequence, from her thus being always "in the very beſt company." Poor ambition! as if there was any other real diſtinction but that which is acquired by goodneſs of heart or ſuperiority of underſtanding. This poor woman was a merchant's daughter in the city; and I have heard Mr. Woodfield ſay, for I was not then acquainted with her, that, in the younger part of her life, ſhe would have thought it

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an honour to have received a curtesy from the lady of a new-made knight at Haberdasher's Hall, for she was even then partial, like Mrs. Heidelberg, to *quality*. By means of some persons of rank, to whom her husband, who was a banker, granted certain pecuniary accommodations, she has been introduced to two or three titled people; and among those of that description there are many who, even more than their inferiors, find life so tedious, that they are glad of any company, and therefore do not refuse such as Mrs. Hammerton, certain that if they cannot laugh *with*, her, they can laugh *at* her, which answers their purpose as well: Perhaps, when she is in the society of those for whom she has so profound a veneration she may bridle her rapid eloquence, and permit others to talk a little too.

Elizabeth. I cannot imagine how that is possible; for I observe, that whenever any thing for a moment interrupt

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ed their mamma, the young ladies all began talking together as loud as poſſible.

Caroline. They put me in mind of a neſt of hungry young brids, all opening their mouths at once.

Mrs. Woolfield. Perhaps there is nothing in which people err ſo egregiouſly is in the manner of carrying on converſation. In thoſe who value themſelves on ſuperior talents and information, there is often an eagerneſs to be attended to, that defeats their purpoſe of being either inſtructive or agreeable. To bear an equal part in converſation, without hurting the ſelf-love of others; to allow that reciprocity of diſcourſe that gives every one an opportunity of being heard, and which is the great charm of ſociety, is the effect of the ſomething we have agreed to call good breeding: And to be really well-bred, requires good ſenſe, which enables us to enter

enter into the characters and ſentiments of others. Thuser thereare people auturally well-bred; and there are others who, though they have always lived among people of high rank are ſo rude and ill-manner'd that it is a penance to be in their company.

Caroline. I own aunt, I have ſometimes been in company with people who are called "remarkably clever," and I have thought it owing to my own ignorance that I could not find out the brilliancy of which I had heard ſo much.

Mrs. Woodfield. That is another error, my dear Caroline, to believe that people who have emminent talents are always to be witty; what can be ſaid witty in common converſation? I of tenhave remarked one of thoſe unfortunate people, who have the reputation of a wit, labouring to produce ſome pleaſant ſally, becauſe he knew it was expected of him, but failing, has been diſcouraged for

the whole evening; to add to which, ſome good-natured friend has obſerved, that "Mr E. was not in ſpirits."

Elizabeth. Mamma, I'll tell you who tries me more then any body,—Mrs. Cardimore.

Mrs. Woodfield. And yet ſhe is the beſt kind of woman in the world.

Elizabeth. But ſhe has ſomehow ſuch a teazing way; is always finding fault, and telling people how they might do better. Then ſhe has ſo many whims about her own children. Jemmy looks pale, and Mary has a trick of ſtanding upon one leg, and ſhe is afraid little Emily will have bleak eyes; really it tires one to death.

Mrs. Woodfield. Mrs. Cardimore was an heireſs, and was always brought up to think that every thing relating to her was of the utmoſt importance. The mind,

mind, ſtrongly impreſſed with this idea, has never left it, even in a long commerce with the world: She teazes her huſband, poor man! more than ſhe does her friends; and, in the midſt of affluence and proſperity of every kind, has found the art of making him and herſelf miſerable. It is in vain that ſome friends, who loved them both, have endeavoured to cure her of this foible, which degenerates into a vice, by repreſenting to her how happy ſhe is, compared with this or the other perſon. She does not think ſo, ſhe ſees nothing extraordinary in their being unhappy, impoveriſhed, or liable to any other evil; but that *She* herſelf ſhould have the ſmalleſt pebble in her path, ſeems the moſt ſtrange thing in the world. Yet with all this, Mrs. Cardimore is really a well-meaning woman; is a good wife and a good mother; though no perſon who has paſſed a whole day in her company ever deſires to paſs a ſecond.

Caroline.

Caroline. Yet I dare ſay, aunt, that th- ſel-love, that ap ars ſo diſagreeable in this lady, is not more than every body has, but that people who have been leſs indulged contrive to conceal it better.

Mrs. Woodfield. Not always. You remember, I think, Mrs. Indworth?

Caroline Perfectly well,

Mrs. Woodfield. She is another inſtance of the ſame irkſome temper, appearing in a ſomewhat different form. Without beauty and underſtanding, and born rather below the middle ranks of life, ſhe has a prodigious deſire to be a perſon of conſequence wherever ſhe appears; and ſhe contrives to effect it, by always being diſcontented. As ſhe has no children, her miſeries are all about herſelf; and ſhe happens to have an huſband who loves her, and who either does not or will not ſee how

trouble

troubleſome ſhe makes herſelf. It is always too cold or too hot; the air is oppreſſive; her nerves are abſolutely ſhaken to pieces by the roads; the wind gives her an inſupptable head-ache; the duſt blinds her; ſitting up late deſtroys her health; going to bed early makes her low-ſpirited; London never agrees with her; the country is too bleak for ſuch a frame as hers.—The poor man, her huſband, who is unaccountably attached to her, is always buſied in trying to make her eaſy, but he feels horribly *uneaſy* himſelf, though he does not know that all his former friends are pitying him. One of them, a very pleaſant lively young man, obſerved to me, the firſt time I ever ſaw Mr. and Mrs. Indworth after their marriage, "That his poor friend, Frank Indworth, was a wretch for life, for he had married a *piper*."

Elizabeth. He muſt be a very good-natured man; for ſome croſs brutiſh men would not endure ſuch a woman.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. I have often obſerved, that theſe teazing-tempered women, who are inſupportable to their acquaintance, have the undeſerved good fortune to meet with patient and obliging huſbands. However, my dear girls, it is an experiment hat I hope none of you will ever try? and now we will diſmiſs the converſation to which the Hammerton family gave riſe, and, to ſoothe our minds after ſome unpleaſant hours we will have recourſe, as uſual, to the poets. Elizabeth, read to me the invocation to Evening, which I bade you mark yeſterday in the taſh.

Elizabeth.

" Come, Evening, once again; ſeaſon of peace,
" Return, ſweet Evening, and continue long!
" Methinks I ſee thee in the ſtreaky weſt,
" With matron-ſtep, ſlow moving, while the
" Night
" Treads on thy ſweeping train; one hand
" employ'd
" In letting fall the curtain of repoſe

" On

" On bird and beaſt, the other charg'd for
" man,
" With ſweet oblivion of the cares of day,
" Not ſumptuouſly adorn'd, or needing aid,
" Like homely-featured Night, with cluſ-
" t'ring gems ;
" A ſtar or two, juſt twinkling on thy brow,
" Suffices thee ; ſave that the moon is thine
" Not leſs than hers ; not worn indeed ſo high
" With oſtentatious pageantry, but, ſet
" With modeſt grandeur in thy purple zone,
" Reſplendent leſs, but of an ample round.
" Come then ! and thou ſhalt find thy votary
" calm,
" Or make me ſo !"

Caroline. If I could remember it which however, I cannot do prefectly, I would repeat another addreſs to Evening, which I know you admire, aunt; Collins's blank Ode.

Mrs. Woodfield. Cannot you recollect it ? try.

Caroline. Not more than the two or three laſt verſes, I fear.

" While

" While Spring ſhall pour his ſhowers, as oft
" he wont,
" And bathe thy breathing treſſes, meekeſt Eve;
" While Summer loves to ſport
" Beneath thy lingering light;
" While fallow Autumn fills thy lap with
" leaves,
" And Winter, yelling through the troublous
" air,
" Affrights thy ſhrinking train,
" And rudely rends thy robes;
" So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
" Shall fancy, friendſhip, ſcience, ſmiling peace,
" Thy gentle influence own,
" And love thy favourite name."

DIALOGUE X

THE ALARM

THE dark and gloomy month of November was now arrived; but to outward appearances the family of Mrs. Woodfield gave leſs attention than uſual, for they expected, by every poſt, to hear that Colonel Cecil, who was arrived in London and ſlowly recovering, would fix the day for ſetting out for their abode; and only his earneſt deſire, and the neceſſity of conſtant attendance on her family, prevented his ſiſter from attending him in town.

Every morning, however, when the weather did not forbid their excurſions his daughter and her two couſins went early to the place where the letters were uſually

uſually left, about a mile and a half from the houſe, eager to procure ſome new intelligence of his intended arrival, though Caroline could not think of the approaching interview, which could not fail of being extremely affecting to them both. When her father bade her adieu, her mother was ſuffering under a lingering illneſs, which ſoon after terminated in her death. The recollection of that ſcene, as well as of all the dangers her father had ſince encountered, muſt make their meeting now very affecting to both.

The country, which once appeared ſo melancholy a reſidence, had now loſt its horrors. Gratitude towards her aunt, affection for her couſins, and a taſte for the domeſtic amuſements and reſources the country afforded, had taken place of that ſullen apathy, which on her coming to reſide in the family, had given her aunt ſo much uneaſineſs.

The

The good ſenſe and taſte that nature had given her, had now room to diſplay itſelf; and even the dull and grey ſkies, the almoſt diſmantled woods, and cheerleſs aſpect, which every object wore around her, failed not to awaken in her mind poetical recollections.

On their way to the cottage by the high road ſide, which ſerved as a ſort of poſt-houſe to the neighbouring villages, was a rocky eminence: From the top it afforded a view of the ſea; at its foot ran the narrow-winding path; and its abrupt and rugged ſides preſented, in ſome places, bare ſcars of rock, where the ſand-martin or the bat had found ſhelter; in others it was ſhaded with broom, female fern, and feſtoons of ivy. It was here that during the heats of ſummer, the little party had often ſtopped on their walk, to enjoy the cool ſhade of the rocks, and the refreſhing echoes of the ſtream that, iſſuing from a cavern near the top, fell in ſmall

but

but clear and brilliant guſhes of water, till it wound away near the path over a deep-worn channel, and found its way to the river which croſſed a neighbouring heath.

No flowers now adorned its ſtony acclivity. An old oak, whoſe tawny leaves had yet reſiſted the ſharp winds of autumn, ſeemed to mourn over the withered foliage beneath. The three girls ſtopped a moment, at the deſire of Caroline; who, reſting upon a fragment of rock, recollected that ſhe had ſomewhere read a deſcription of ſcenery extremely reſembling the landſcape before her. A little conſideration brought the paſſage to her mind; but ſhe felt grateful, that the laſt lines had no alluſion to her circumſtance, who might, from the loſs of a father, have found them but too applicable:

" 'Twas here, even here, where now I ſit re
" clind,
" And Winter's ſighs, found hollow in the
" wind;
" Loud

" Loud and more loud the blaſt of Evening
" raves,
" And ſtrips the oaks of their laſt lingering
" leaves,
" The eddying foliage in the tempeſt flies,
" And fills, with duſkier gloom, the thicken-
" ing ſkies ;
" Red ſinks the Sun behind the howling hill,
" And ruſhes, with hoarſe ſtream, the moun-
" tain rill ;
" And now, with ruffling billow cold and pale
" Runs, ſwoln and daſhing down the lonely
" vale :
" While to theſe tearful eyes, grief's faded
" form,
" Sits, on the cloud, and ſighs amid the ſtorm*."

Hardly had Caroline finiſhed repeating theſe lines, which, except the hour of the day, gave to her imagination the reflection of the ſcene before her, when ſuddenly, from an excavation in the rock which had concealed them, came forward a group of gypſies, two men, three women, and ſeveral little ragged

* From Louiſa ; a Poetical Novel, by Miſs Seward.

children,

children, who all ſpeaking together in language peculiar to themſelves, began to beg; while the three girls, extremely terrified, walked on as quick as they could, ſearching, however for what halfpence or ſmall money they had about them, which they threw towards the importunate group; one woman, however, ſtill continuing to follow them, and inſiſting on being allowed to tell their fortunes, while, on looking back, they ſaw the two men ſtill gazing after them; their terror, and of courſe their ſpeed, increaſed, and they at length gained an open road, and ſaw two men at plough in a field immediately near it. Their troubleſome follower then left them; but Caroline, though ſhe had more courage than either of her couſins, was ſo much alarmed at an encouuter, which in all their ſolitary walks had never happened before, that ſhe engaged a farmer's ſervant whom ſhe met, and whom they happened to know, to attend them

them for the reſt of their walk, and ſhe determined to go home another way.

Their walk was fruitleſs, for they found no letter from Colonel Cecil. On their return home, they of courſe mentioned the apprehenſions they had felt on their way; but occupied in other buſineſs juſt at that moment, and ſeeing them all ſafe around her, Mrs. Woodfield deferred liſtening to their little hiſtory till evening.

It ſoon came—and, aſſembled round their work-table, ſome other occurrences that had happened to a friend of Mrs. Woodfield's engaged them. The lowering day had been followed by a ſtormy and wet evening. The wind and rain beat heavy againſt the windows; when Henrietta ſaid, "Mamma, I wonder where thoſe people we ſaw to-day take ſhelter in ſuch a night as this."

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. In barns and out-houſes. They are a people of whom the farmers are ſaid often to be afraid; and that they find it leſs hazardous to give them leave to aſſemble of a night in their out-buildings, than by refuſing, incur their reſentment.

Elizabeth. But I don't underſtand why they are called gypſies.

Mrs. Woodfield. Becauſe they are ſuppoſed to come originally from Egypt, though in France they are called Bohemians. There was an elaborate hiſtory of them publiſhed not long ſince, which, however, I never happen to have met with, ſo that I do not know the reſult of thoſe inquiries, which I conclude the hiſtorian made, as to the cauſe of this ſingular race of people being ſpread over Europe, where they are ſaid to have long had, and indeed ſtill to have a government and laws of their own. I recollect having ſeen, when I was

was a young woman, more numerous parties of them than I ever obſerve now, and that they had more ſwarthy complexions. I ſhould rather think, that the people we denominate in this country, travellers, unhappy houſeleſs wanderers, who, ſome from neceſſity, and others, perhaps, from choice, lead the ſame kind of vagabond life, have ſo intermingled with the original race, that their diſtinct character is nearly loſt. Among theſe wretched people were thoſe who uſed to be called Mad Toms, and affected inſanity to enforce or excite charity. Edgar, you know, in Lear, ſays, he will aſſume the ſemblance of one of thoſe who,

——" From low farms,
" Poor-pelting villages, ſheep-cots, and mills,
" Enforce their charity.

And I remember being extremely terrified, when I was a girl, with female beggars, who came dreſſed with flowers and ſtraws, and called themſelves Couſin Betties: I imagine theſe people are all connected.

Caroline. There are a great many ſtories in novels, of gypſies ſtealing away children; Do you think, aunt, it ever happens?

Mrs. Woodfield. I cannot ſay that it never has happened; but, I ſhould think, much leſs frequently than noveliſts have found it convenient to ſuppoſe. The gypſies ſeem to have made a great impreſſion on the mind of Fielding, who tells a ſtory about a party of them, in his Foundling, which would not be endured in a modern novel, as it is fooliſh, and contributes nothing to the progreſs of the ſtory.

Caroline. Joſeph Andrews, too, is exchanged by the gypſies.

Mrs. Woodfield. Yes, but with inconſiſtencies in the relation, that a writer of the preſent day would not dare to venture upon; and which, greatly as I admire much of Fielding's writing, has always, in my mind, ſpoiled the ſtory. However, I believe now, that no children

are

are ſtolen or exchanged by thoſe people; and that notwithſtanding your panic to-day, for which, however, I do not blame you, they do little other harm than pilfer from the farms, kill hares in their ſeats, or ſometimes venture on a ſheep, or a pig, that they find ſtraggling in the fields, remote from any habitation.

Cowper, in the firſt book of "The Taſk," gives an admirably-correct deſcription of them; and having done ſo very juſtly exclaims:

" Strange! that a creature rational, and caſt
" In human mold, ſhould brutalize, by choice,
" His nature; and though capable of arts,
" By which the world might profit, and himſelf,
" Self-baniſh'd, from ſociety, prefer
" Such ſqualid ſloth to honourable toil!
" Yet even theſe, though, feigning ſickneſs oft,
" They ſwathe the forehead, drag the limping
" limb,
" And vex their fleſh with artificial ſores,
" Can change their whine into a cheerful note,
" When ſafe occaſion offers; and with dance,
" And muſic of the bladder and the bag,
" Beguile their woes, and make the woods reſound
" Such

" Such health, and gaiety of heart, enjoy
" The houſeleſs rovers of the ſylvan world;
" And breathing wholeſome air, and wandering
" much
" Need other phyſic none, to heal th' effects
" Of loathſome diet, penury, and cold."

Hardly were theſe lines finiſhed, when, at the iron gate which ſeparated the court before the houſe from the common on which it was ſituated, a grumbling voice was heard, hoarſely and rudely demanding admittance. Terror and affright were immediately viſible on the face of the three girls, nor was that of Mrs. Woodfield entirely exempt from the ſame ſymptoms. She deſired them to liſten. The man at the gate was heard, amid the howlings of the wind and driving of the rain, to growl out his diſpleaſure at being kept ſo long in the ſtorm, and to thump at the gate with a great ſtick.

[Mrs. Woodfield rang the bell; and a female ſervant entering, ſhe bade her ſend Samuel, a lad of about eighteen, to ſee who it was.]

Mary. Lord, Ma'am, Samuel isn't within; he've been gone down to the village

village above an hour agon, and is not returned yet!

Mrs. Woodfield. You muſt go to the door then, and ſee what the man wants, who ſo loudly inſiſts upon being let in.

Mary. Who? I, Ma'am, go to the gate! No, that I would not, not if you would give me the whole world: But, Ma'am, I'll go up ſtairs and open one of the windows, and aſk him, if you pleaſe, what he wants; for, I am ſure, t'would not be ſafe nohow to ſpeak to him from below, unleſs one know'd who it was; for it was but laſt week that five men in ſailor's jackets came a begging to Comb Farm, and frightened Dame Jedwyn out of her very wits, and if it had not a been——

Mrs. Woodfield. Well, well; but what is all this to the purpoſe? However, ſince your fears are ſo violent, and we have no man in the houſe, go up, and, from the window, inquire what the man wants.

Mary

Mary (returning out of breath). Lord, Ma'am! 'tis a man come on horſeback, ſays how he have got a letter which he muſt deliver into your hands.

Mrs. Woodfield. (viſibly agitated). A letter! Good Heavens! from whom can it be, that it is thus ſent expreſs! for you ſay, Mary, he has an horſe with him.

Caroline. Oh! it is from my father, I am ſure it is! He is worſe; he is prevented coming!

Mrs. Woodfield. I hope not. Alas! it may be ſome letter that relates to my abſent boys. But what weakneſs this is! while we are heſitating we might be ſatisfied. Give me the umbrella; I will go out myſelf.

Caroline and Elizabeth (ſpeaking together, Henrietta clinging to her mother). Oh! pray, dear aunt, dear mamma, do not go; or ſuffer us to go with you.

Mrs. Woodfield. No, my loves! I certainly ſhall not do that. I am perſuaded there

there is no danger; but if there were, it would not be leſſened by your ſharing it. I ſhall only ſpeak to the man through the gate.

[She goes thither and receives a letter, which ſhe returns eagerly to read.

Caroline. Oh, how my heart beats! if it ſhould be bad news from my father!

Mrs. Woodfield (recovering herſelf). Well, dear girls, I can now happily put you out of ſuſpence. It *is* a letter, Caroline, from your father, but fortunately it brings us the moſt agreeable news. He has already left London: He remains two days at E—, with his old friend, General T. and will be here to a late dinner on Thurſday.

Caroline. Thank Heaven, then! we ſhall certainly ſee him at laſt.

Mrs. Woodfield. And with him another viſitor, who will alſo be very welcome.

Caroline. Surely not one of my brothers!

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. No, my dear Caroline; ſo much good fortune does not come together. But would you not be glad to ſee one of Elizabeth and Henrietta's brothers? your couſin Harry, who has been ſo long in Scotland?

Caroline. Certainly I ſhould.

Mrs. Woodfield. Well, then, we ſhall have the pleaſure of ſeeing him with my brother. He came from Glaſgow, and, going immediately to his uncle, found him on the point of leaving London, and began his journey with him: And now, ſince our hearts are at eaſe, let us ſit down, and call ourſelves to account for the panic we have been all thrown into.

Caroline. From which, my dear aunt, you were not more exempt than we were.

Mrs. Woodfield. I own I was not; but my apprehenſions were infinitely greater, after I knew it was a man with a letter, than while I ſuppoſed it to be only a drunken fellow, who, without having any bad

bad deſign, might have been troubleſome, as we had nobody in the houſe to oblige him to go away.

Henrietta. I was ſure, almoſt, that it was one of thoſe frightful gypſey men we met to-day.

Elizabeth. And I was perſuaded that it was the ſailors, that Mary ſays have frightened a great number of people about the country lately.

Mrs. Woodfield. Really you had both luckly imaginations. I ſhall be angry with the ſervants, if they tell you theſe ſtories of threatened robberies, and I know not what: But it is aſtoniſhing what a paſſion the *people* in every country have for the horrible and the wonderful. I have known a mad dog, a gang of imaginary houſe-breakers, or two or three ſtout vagabonds in ſailors jackets, keep an whole neighbourhood in alarm for ſix weeks;—ſome had heard them, ſome had ſeen them at a diſtance, but I never met with perſons who pretended to have ſuf-

fered from theſe terrific objects. As to mad dogs, that have from time to time alarmed the country, I could never find any other real cauſe for the panic they have occaſioned, than ſome miſerable ſtarved dog, who, become ſavage through hunger or pain, has fled from his inhoſpitable home, or has been driven from it by blows or torments, and, taking ſhelter in ſome out-houſe, or under the ſtraw in a farm yard, is diſcovered, and hunted from his concealment by the brutal clowns, who drive him away with blows and ſhouts, and then wonder the miſerable animal appears wild and diſtracted, and ſnaps at every one who approaches.

As to the marvellous ſtories of robberies and houſe-breaking, which ſometimes run through a country, I never, on inquiry, could diſcover above one of them to be founded on fact. At this diſtance from London, ſuch things very rarely happen; and, alas! my dear children, it is an improvident weakneſs to exhauſt our ſpirits in contending with imaginary

or

or poſſible evils, when it is but too probable that the happieſt and moſt proſperous life will give to every one ſufficient exerciſe for their fortitude.

Even this little alarm was a ſpecimen of the neceſſity of reflection, if we would eſcape from the miſeries of unreal afflictions, which, though they cannot laſt long, are too acute to be borne even a moment without injury. Without reflecting, Caroline was ſeized with immediate apprehenſion for her father; I thought too of him, but I thought ſtill more of my abſent boys; ſo naturally do the mother's feelings ſuperſede every other feeling.

Caroline. And do you not think, aunt, that children love their parents as well as parents their children?

Mrs. Woodfield. Certainly not. The moſt tenderly affectionate child does not feel, for the fondeſt parent, the ſame degree of affection as that parent has felt for

for her. This is ſo ordered by nature, who ſeems to have made the love of a mother for her children the ſtrongeſt of all ſenſations.

Caroline. And yet, aunt, I think there are addreſſes of affection from ſons to their mothers, in one or two Poets that I could name, which do the higheſt honour to the filial tenderneſs of the authors: I do not recollect any in which the parent addreſſes the child.

Mrs. Woodfield. I believe, however, that I can repeat two little pieces of this ſort; one of which you have already ſeen, though you have, perhaps, forgotten it: It is addreſſed by a mother to her children, whoſe future fate, from a long ſeries of calamitous circumſtances in their family, ſeemed to be doubtful, and too propably unfortunate.

SONNET.

" Sighing, I ſee yon little troop at play,
" By ſorrow yet unhurt, untouch'd by care,
" While free and ſportive they enjoy to-day,
" Content, and careleſs of to-morrow's fare.

" Ah!

" Ah! happy age! when youth's unclouded ray
" Lights their green path, and prompts their
" ſimple mirth,
" Ere yet they feel the thorns that, lurking lay
" To wound the wretched pilgrams of the earth.
" Bidding them curſe the hour that gave them
" birth,
" And threw them on a world ſo full of pain,
" Where proſperous folly treads on patient worth,
" And, to deaf pride, misfortune pleads in vain.
" Oh! for their future fate how many fears
" Oppreſs my heart, and fill mine eyes with
" tears!"

The other piece of poetry was written by a woman of high rank and admirable talents, who, without the ſame cauſes for apprehenſion, contemplated her two ſons, eagerly engaged in their infantine ſports, with thoſe mingled emotions of delight and anxiety, that a mother only can feel, and, as I have heard, wrote the lines in queſtion with little or no premeditation:

" Sweet age of bleſt deluſion! Blooming boys,
" Ah! revel long in childhood's thoughtleſs joys,
" With light and pliant ſpirits, that can ſtoop
" To follow, ſportively, the rolling hoop;
" To watch the ſleeping toy with gay delight,
" Or mark, with raptur'd gaze, the ſailing kite;

" Or

" Or, eagerly purſuing pleaſure's call,
" Can find it center'd in the bounding ball!
" Alas! the day *will* come, when ſports like theſe
" Muſt loſe their magic, and their power to pleaſe
" Too ſwiftly fled, the roſy hours of youth,
" Shall yield their fairy-charms to mournful
" truth;
" Even now, a mother's fond prophetic fear,
" Sees the dark train of human ills appear;
" Views various fortune for each lovely child,
" Storms for the bold, and anguiſh for the mild;
" Beholds already, thoſe expreſſive eyes
" Beam a ſad certainty of future ſighs;
" And dreads each ſuffering thoſe dear breaſts may
" know,
" In their long paſſage through a world of woe;
" Perchance predeſtin'd, every pang to prove,
" That treacherous friends inflict, or faithleſs love;
" For, ah! how few have found exiſtence ſweet
" Where grief is ſure, but happineſs deceit!"

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE XII.

THE FAMILY ASSEMBLED.

THE re-union of the members of a family long ſeparated and tenderly attached to each other, is one of the moſt pleaſing and affecting ſpectacles that ſociety preſents. Colonel Cecil, in ſeeing the favourable change that had taken place in the mind and manners of his daughter, found his heart overflow with tender gratitude towards his ſiſter; and the regret he had been once ſo acutely conſcious of, for the loſs of a wife whom he had loved but too much for his happineſs, and indulged too much for her own, was every hour leſs ſenſibly felt. For however his blind affection for her, and the ſtrong influence ſhe had obtained over his mind, had prevented him from ſeeing her errors while ſhe lived, he now internally acknowledged thoſe failings, which he could not yet have borne that any other perſon ſhould even hint at; till theſe keen ſenſations ſubſiding by degrees, he thought of the death

death of his wife as of an event that had at once pained and relieved him.

But the fondneſs he had once had for her, ſeemed now transferred to his daughter, towards whom he felt every day his tenderneſs increaſe. Her amiable manners, her attentive duty, added to the natural graces of her form, made him believe her the moſt perfect of human beings. His health rendered it neceſſary for him to ſell out of the army; but on this he could not determine, being ſtrongly attached to a profeſſion in which he had paſſed the greateſt part of his life; but when he reflected on the dangerous ſituation in which his beloved daughter would be left, ſhould he die either in the field, or from the fatigues incident to the ſoldier's life, which he was now ſo little able to encounter, he determined to ſacrifice his own inclinations to the welfare of the child who had ſo many claims on his heart; and, to the inexpreſſible ſatisfaction of his family, he now quited the army, and, at his ſiſter's earneſt ſolicitation, agreed to remain with her till he could

could find ſome ſmall houſe in the ſame neighbourhood, or fit up a cottage within a mile or two, for himſelf and his Caroline. Enlivened by his preſence, that of her ſecond ſon, and her two little boys from ſchool, the ſmall habitation of Mrs. Woodfield had never appeared ſo gay. Their morning walks were not interrupted, though the Colonel could not accompany them, being ſtill very lame, and having been deſired to take no other exerciſe yet, than what could be procured by a ſervant's drawing him about in a garden chair. The weather was ſometimes too ſevere for him to venture into the air in that conveyance; and when it happened ſo, Caroline, or one of her couſins, remained at home to read to him and attend him.

Sometimes the long evenings were beguiled by works of imagination, ſuch as Mrs Woodfield judged not improper for her daughters, young as they were, to liſten to. The admirable novels of Evelina and Cecilia, but particularly the latter, afforded them at once entertainment and inſtruc-

tion,

tion, without giving them thoſe falſe views of life, which is one of the moſt ſerious objections againſt this ſpecies of writing. Eſſays, and the periodical papers, ſupplied the want of many performances equally intereſting and unexceptionable. The Spectator, Guardian, and Tatler, the Rambler, Idler, World, Adventurer, Connoiſſeur, Mirror, and Obſerver, offered them an inceſſant variety of entertainment and inſtruction. Voyages and Travels alſo were introduced; and in no one inſtance did they find it neceſſary to have recourſe to cards, to enable them to paſs, without languor, the longeſt evening of December. Among other amuſements, each endeavoured to recollect ſome view of the ſcene in every part of the world, when winter reigns in his ſevereſt form, and even with more rugged features than he wore at the preſent moment in England. The Colonel recollected ſome of thoſe lines of Philips, which have been ſo much celebrated, deſcribing winter in Sweden:

"When

"When every ſhrub, and every blade of graſs,
"And every pointed thorn, ſeemed wrought in
" glaſs;
"In pearls and rubies rich the hawthorns ſhew,
"While, through the ice, the crimſon berries
" glow;
"The thick-ſprung reeds, the watry marſhes
" yield,
"Seem poliſh'd lances in an hoſtile field;
"The ſpreading oak, the beech, and tow'ring
" pine,
"Glaz'd over, in the freezing æther ſhine;
"The frighted birds the rattling branches ſhun,
"That wave and glitter in the diſtant ſun:
"When, if a ſudden guſt of wind ariſe,
"The brittle foreſt into atoms flies,
"The crackling wood beneath the tempeſt bends,
"And in a ſpangled ſhower the proſpect ends;
"Or if a ſouthern gale the region warm,
"And by degrees unbind the wintry charm,
"The traveller a miry country ſees,
"And journeys ſad beneath the dropping trees."

Mrs. Woodfield. Oh! brother, your quotation is excellent! but I ſhall, as uſual, bring forward the modern Poet, whoſe deſcriptions never fail to give me new pleaſure. How beautiful are his froſt-pieces!

"The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
"Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents,

"Or

" Or coarſer graſs, up-ſpearing o'er the reſt,
" Of late unſightly or unſeen, now ſhine
" Conſpicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
" And fledged with ivy feathers not ſuperb."

His picture of the effects of froſt on a water-fall, is alſo inimitable.

Henry Woodfield. But, my dear Madam, I, who have not yet learned to reliſh blank verſe, at leaſt not as you do, have another living Poet to quote. What can be finer than theſe few lines of Dr. Darwin's, that ſet before us ſome of the moſt ſtriking features of a polar winter!

" Where leads the northern ſtar his lucid train,
" High o'er the ſnow-clad earth and icy main,
" With milky light the white horiſon ſtreams,
" And to the moon each ſparkling mountain
" gleams;
" Slow o'er the printed ſnows, with ſilent walk,
" Huge ſhaggy forms acroſs the twilight ſtalk,
" And ever and anon, with hideous ſound,
" Burſt the thick ribs of ice and thunder round."

Mrs Woodfield. The winter ſcenes of Thompſon are not, in my opinion, inferior to any of theſe. But, inſtead of any repetition of what we all know ſo well, I will relate

relate what happened, not many years ſince, to two ladies with whom I was acquainted in the North, who were loſt in the ſnow, on their way from Scotland.

In one of the provinces neareſt, though not actually in the Highlands, dwelt a Scottiſh gentleman, who, though of as ancient a family as any in his country, poſſeſſed no other fortune than a ſmall paternal farm; on which, however, he contrived, with the aſſiſtance of a wife, whom he had married early in life, to bring up a family of three ſons and a daughter, not only decently, but comfortably. The boys as ſoon as they were old enough, were ſent out into the world. One entered into the army, another went to the Eaſt Indies, and the third, after having been ſome few years in the compting-houſe of a Merchant in London, was taken into the buſineſs; and by his aſſiduity and quickneſs, ſoon became ſo much maſter of it, that his former maſter, now his partner, already very rich, retired from its fatigues to an houſe at a ſmall diſtance from London, leaving the whole

whole concern to Mr. Charles Widdrington. The very flouriſhing ſituation of this third ſon was, very naturally, a great acquiſition of happineſs, as well as proſperity, to his father, his mother, and his ſiſter, to whom he frequently made preſents, which enabled them to live in much greater affluence than they had done before. At length, Charles Widdrington made ſome connexion with a perſon intruſted with the affairs of government; and by means of this friend, made ſuch advantage of the fluctuation of the funds, that in a few months he doubled his fortune; and ſuch golden viſions aroſe to his imagination, that he quitted the buſineſs on which he had ſo proſperouſly begun the world, and gave himſelf up entirely to the more alluring career of ſpeculation in the ſtocks, by which he had no doubt of realizing, in a very ſhort time, an immenſe fortune.

For ſome time, his ſucceſs was more than equal to his moſt ſanguine expectations. He went down to viſit his father in all the ſplendour of a man of large fortune; directed

directed ſome additions to be made to the family-manſion; ordered new furniture; dreſſed his mother and ſiſter in a ſtyle they had never before dreamed of; and fixed on the ſpring of the following year (for his viſit was made in autumn) as the time when he intreated them all to come to London for ſome months, that Eupheme (which was the name of his ſiſter) might receive that poliſh which a great capital alone is ſuppoſed to give. She was not more than eighteen; and being very pretty, he perſuaded himſelf, that if ſhe was introduced to the world as the ſiſter of a man of fortune, her own could not fail of being eſtabliſhed by an affluent marriage.

Eupheme, who till then had never any ambition higher than to remain in Scotland, and to be, at ſome future period, miſtreſs of ſuch an humble habitation as her paternal houſe, was not much dazzled with theſe ſchemes of future greatneſs: but on her father, they had a very different effect; in the long conferences he had with his ſon, he ſeemed to hava caught all his enthuſiaſm in purſuit

purſuit of fortune. They entered into ſome engagements together, which the elder Mr. Widdrington aſſured his wife, would turn out greatly to the advantage of the whole family; and early in November, their ſon left them, elate with the viſions of accumulating fortune, which now offered to him for the enſuing winter.

Soothed with theſe golden dreams, ſix or eight weeks paſſed away, when the family of the elder Widdrington was ſuddenly arouſed from their indulgence by two men from London, who demanded to ſpeak to him. He was ſhut up with them for ſome time, and then, in viſible agitation, he came to his wife, and told her, that ſome circumſtances had occurred in the affairs of his ſon Charles, which had made his preſence abſolutely neceſſary in London, whither he muſt go with the perſons who were then in the houſe, and who were about to ſet out immediately. Though Mrs. Widdrington was entirely unacquainted with ſuch matters, ſhe ſaw, by the confuſion and diſtreſs that appeared in the countenance of her

huſband

huſband, that all was not well. She of courſe expreſſed her uneaſineſs in very ſtrong terms, which Mr. Widdrington endeavoured to appeaſe, by telling her, that the affair, on which his preſence was neceſſary in London, would be ſettled with very little trouble, and that it was not likely either to diminiſh or impede the future proſperity of their ſon.

Mrs. Widdrington, relying on the aſſurances of a man who had never deceived her, endeavoured to conquer the uneaſineſs ſhe felt: It was yet eaſier to re-aſſure their daughter, and both ſaw, with apparent calmneſs, the maſter of the manſion depart from an abode which he had not quitted for any time for a great number of years.

When he was gone, however, the apprehenſions of his wife became more uneaſy to her, yet ſhe knew not what ſhe feared. This painful anxiety was a little ſubdued by a letter ſhe received from her huſband, written on the road, which repeated thoſe aſſurances he had given her before his departure, and ſeemed to breathe a tranquillity of mind which ſhe thought it was impoſſible

Mr. Widdrington could aſſume, if her fears had any foundation. He promiſed to write to her the moment he arrived in London, and every week till his return, which he ſaid there was no doubt of his doing within a month.

Thus re-aſſured, the mother and daughter returned to their uſual ſimple occupations; but time wore away: twice as much had already elapſed as was neceſſary for Mr. Widdrington to have arrived in London, and to have written from thence, but no letter came. His wife, however this circumſtance might renew her alarm, endeavoured yet to calm her mind, by believing that the hurry of the buſineſs which had carried him to London might engage every moment of his time; but a week, ten days longer paſſed, and no letter came. Unwilling to communicate to her daughter the anguiſh ſhe felt herſelf, ſhe concealed her terrors till they could no longer be a ſecret to any body, for the houſe was now viſited by thoſe ſort of men who are in Scotland what ſheriff's officers are here, who informed her that, at ſuch a time a ſeizure would be

be made of all the effects in the houſe, and cattle on the farm, &c. in conſequence of debts Mr. Widdrington had contracted in being engaged for his ſon.

Heavy as this ſtroke was, it was ſome hours after rendered almoſt inſupportable by a letter from Mr. Widdrington himſelf, in which, after a ſhort and confuſed preamble to prepare her for the cruel intelligence he was about to communicate, he informed her, that in conſequence of the treachery of a man, who to ſave himſelf had ſacrificed his ſon Charles for whom he had ſome months before engaged himſelf to the amount of all he was worth in the world, they were both entirely undone; that his ſon had abſconded, and that he was himſelf in the King's Bench priſon, whither he intreated her to come, with Eupheme, as ſoon as poſſible, as it was only by the exertions of ſo faithful a friend that he had any hope of being releaſed.

The wretched wife, ſeeing how much occaſion there was for fortitude, endeavoured to collect enough to carry her through the trying circumſtances ſhe was thus involved

volved in. She had no male relation to whom ſhe could apply for aſſiſtance, for ſhe was the laſt of her family: On herſelf alone, therefore, ſhe muſt depend; and endeavouring to give to her terrified daughter ſome portion of that courage ſhe wanted herſelf, they turned whatever they could into money, and hiring a chaiſe at the neareſt town where ſuch a conveyance was to be had, they ſet out for Edinburgh, where, on arriving, they meant to have proceeded to London by the public conveyances; but finding that very expenſive, they were perſuaded by the only acquaintance they had there, who did not fly from them in their adverſity, to hire a chaiſe, which he engaged to find at a cheap rate, that ſhould carry them as far as York, where he ſaid he would give them a letter of introduction to a friend, who would, at his requeſt, find for them the beſt and cheapeſt conveyance to London. Of this offer Mrs. Widdrington gladly accepted, for at her time of life, (as ſhe was upwards of fifty) in no very ſtrong health, and depreſſed by the greatneſs and ſuddenneſs of the calamity that had fallen on her family, ſhe was glad to find any expedient

pedient by which ſhe might eſcape from the fatigue and hurry of ſtage coaches.

This matter being arranged, they began again their melancholy journey, and the firſt two days (for they could proceed but ſlowly) paſſed without any accident. On the morning of the third, a fall of ſnow threatened to impede their progreſs; but impatient to get on, Mrs Widdrington preſſed the driver to haſten as much as poſſible. The man, who probably was already tired of the engagement he had made, either was, or pretended to be taken very ill, and, in deſpite of their remonſtrances, ſtoped at a ſmall alehouſe by the way-ſide, where he lingered two hours under pretence of recruiting his ſtrength, and then told them that, as he found it impoſſible for him to go any farther, he had hired a lad who would drive them to a town about four miles off, where, if he could not rejoin them in the morning, the landlord of the alehouſe they were at, had a brother, who would undertake to conduct them ſafely to York.

The prayers and remonſtrances of Mrs. Widdrington were equally vain. Above an hour paſſed in arguing with him to no purpoſe. Night was coming on, the ſnow continued ſlowly to fall, and the dread of being compelled to paſs the night in ſo wretched a place as they were then in, at length determined Mrs. Widdrington to ſubmit. They departed then, between five and ſix in the evening, for the town in queſtion, which lay out of the high road; but the maſter of the alehouſe aſſured her, the man who was to drive her, knew the way perfectly well, that the road was good, and that it was the only place where they would be ſure of meeting with a perſon that would carry them ſafely to the end of their journey.

Before they had croſſed the wide heath on which the alehouſe was ſituated, the ſtorm of ſnow increaſed; It was nearly dark, and the horſes, from the balls of ſnow that gathered on their feet, and from the ſlipperineſs of the road, ſeemed to be ſo fatigued that they were likely to fall at every ſtep.

The

The man who drove was a ſturdy clown, who ſeemed never to have driven a chaiſe before. He was not the leſs obſtinate for being very ignorant, and he plunged on through thick and thin, regardleſs of the intreaties of Mrs. Widdrington, or the danger he was frequently in of overturning the chaiſe.

In this manner they blundered through a large wood, where the ſnow had not yet concealed the track that led, as the man ſaid, to the town in queſtion. It brought them out on the edge of one of thoſe extenſive wolds or moors ſo frequent in the North of England. It was almoſt dark; yet the man perſiſting in his aſſurance that he perfectly knew the road, though all was now covered with ſnow, the chaiſe was ſuddenly overturned by the falling of one of the horſes, and the driver thrown to ſome diſtance.

He ſoon, however, recovered himſelf, and, not without many execrations, approached to deliver the mother and daughter from their perilous ſituation in the chaiſe. They were neither of them hurt, but

but greatly terrified, alike at what they had ſuffered and what they feared; for it was now evident that one of the wheels was broke, and that in the carriage it was quite impoſſible for them to proceed. Mrs. Widdrington, her trembling daughter now hanging on her arm, collected all her reſolution to conſider what was to be done; and at length determined that the poſtillion ſhould put their baggage on the horſes, and lead they way, while they attempted to find the road back to the houſe they had left, for the dreary expanſe before them afforded no ſign of habitations; not a light glimmered acroſs the deſolate plain, and the man owned that the town to which they had been directed was at leaſt five miles off on its oppoſite ſide.

Nothing can be imagined much more deplorable than the ſituation of theſe two poor women, who never had before been expoſed to the leaſt hardſhip or difficulty. To remain where they were, was to periſh in the ſnow before morning, yet it was far from clear that they ſhould be able to reach any ſhelter. The man, however,

however, who did not ſeem much leſs alarmed than they were, walked on, leading the horſes; and the mother and daughter, holding by each other, followed as well as they could.

Suddenly the road which the man had taken turned into a kind of lane; by the reflection of the ſnow, they diſcovered that it was bounded on one ſide by the wood they had been in, and on the other by an high old wall. They were then near an houſe; a circumſtance that Mrs. Widdrington ſpoke of with the greateſt joy; but their guide was ſo far from appearing to ſhare their joy, that he exclaimed, in great conſternation, that he had miſſed his way, and that it was better to go back. Mrs. Widdrington, regardleſs of his apparent reluctance, now eagerly aſked which was the way to the entrance of the houſe. The man ſullenly anſwered, that it was no matter, for that they ſhould get no good there, and it was better not to attempt to enter.

Any ſhelter, however, appeared ſo deſirable to Mrs. Widdrington, that ſhe diſregarded this ſpeech; but Euphemie eagerly

eagerly aſked the man, "Why they had better not try to gain admittance?

"Why! replied he, "why becauſe 'tis haunted."—"And is it not inhabited then?"—"Oh! aye, there's inhabitants ſure enough, ſuch as they be."—"If there are," ſaid Mrs. Widdrington, "nothing ſhall prevent me from aſking a ſhelter for the night." She then again repeated the queſtion of which was the way to the front, or to any entrance of the houſe. The man with reluctance ſhewed her, and they, in a few moments, came to the corner of an high wall, and turned perceived an high and heavy old-faſhioned iron gate, through which they ſaw a court, and the front of a large old-faſhioned ſtone houſe, with thoſe kind of ſcollopped points that look like the corners of a minced pye. The window-frames, they could perceive, were of heavy ſtone-work, and no light appeared at any of them; but as it was not late, Mrs. Widdrington deſired the man to endeavour to find a bell, or otherwiſe to make their diſtreſs known to the perſons within. This, therefore, though ſtill very unwillingly,

unwillingly, he attempted; but for ſome time in vain. A dog, however, was more alert than the reſt of the houſehold, and ſtarting with a violent bark from a kennel in the court, he came with ſuch fury to the iron gate, that Eupheme, retreating in terror, beſought her mother to go back, and rather to encounter the fatigue of returning to the ale-houſe on the heath, than attempt to enter that frightful houſe.

The raging of the dog had more effect on the people of the houſe, than the noiſe of thoſe who had alarmed him. A faint light gleamed from one of the caſements above. A form, which could not be diſtinguiſhed through the gloom, appeared for a moment at it, and then glided away. All the ſtories he had ever heard about, the ſupernatural inhabitants of this houſe, now recurred to the poſtillion, who, with his teeth chattering in his head, rather from fear than cold, again implored Mrs. Widdrington not to think of entering it.

The light now again appeared in the chamber. A figure, which did not appear

to be the ſame, ſlowly opened the caſement, and in a ſharp and tremulous voice, demanded who was there, and what was their buſineſs?

The inceſſant barking, or rather roaring of the dog, hardly permitted Mrs. Widdrington to anſwer, (in an accent that admitted no doubt at leaſt of her country) 'that ſhe was a perſon from Scotland, who, with her daughter, was travelling towards London, but that having miſſed their way in the ſnow, their chaiſe was overturned and broken, and they were likely to periſh during ſo ſevere a night, if the inhabitants of the houſe were not charitable enough to receive them.

The old man or woman who had ſpoken to them, now retired, and, without giving any anſwer, ſhut the window. The heart of Mrs. Widdrington ſunk within her. She looked round, to ſee if any cottage ſurrounded this inhoſpitable manſion, where ſhe might find an aſylum, which it ſeemed to deny her, but none appeared. Its front looked through a curve in the woods over the extenſive

moor

moor they had attempted to paſs, and on the ſides of it were high walls and ruinous offices. A dark and heavy ſtorm of ſnow now came on, and the objects which were before but faintly ſeen, were no longer diſcernible. Mrs. Widdrington gave herſelf and her daughter up for loſt: The dog, however, was a ſufficient intimation to the perſons within, that their petitioners ſtill remained at the gate.

Almoſt a quarter of an hour longer paſſed before any one again appeared. At length the ſame dim and doubtful figure whom they had before heard ſpeak, ſlowly opened the ſame caſement, and bade them go to another gate a few yards farther in the wall, where he ſaid he would come and ſpeak to them. They crept to the place he pointed out; for by this time they were nearly periſhed with cold. Here they again waited ſome time, till, from a ſide door of the old Gothic edifice, the figure, holding a lantern in one hand, and in the other a ruſty broad ſword, ſlowly approached. He was dreſſed in a long black or very dark gown; ſomething equally dark was bound

over

over his hollow brows; his face was long, pale, and ſhrivelled, and two ſmall eyes glared from their deep ſockets, under a broad ruſty hat: He held up his lantern when he came cloſe to this gate, which was alſo of iron, and examined the three perſons who appeared at it, but ſpoke not a word in anſwer to the earneſt intreaties that Mrs. Widdrington made to be let in. After having made this ſilent inquiry for ſome minutes, he told her, in a voice that made her ſhudder, that though it was what he had ſworn never to do, yet, as he believed her diſtreſs might be real, he would, for once, break through his reſolution, and let ſtrangers enter his houſe; but that as for the man with them, he could give him no other permiſſion than to go into the ſtable. The man who, half-frozen as he was, felt no inclination to enter an houſe where he was firmly perſuaded evil ſpirits kept their court, declared he ſhould be quite as well content with the ſtable. He was admitted, therefore, into the yard, and the old man pointed to a door on its oppoſite ſide, where he ſaid there was a ſhelter for himſelf and horſes; a

ſhelter

ſhelter was all he ſeemed diſpoſed to grant to either of them.

While the poſtillion, then, trembling, and looking back at every ſtep, led the weary animals acroſs the dreary yard, Mrs. Widdrington and her daughter, petrified with terror and cold, followed the old man, who, with a ſlow and feeble ſtep, walked before them. At the door of the houſe ſtood another figure, who, except his having a more ſqualid appearance, reſembled their diſmal-looking conductor. This ſecond ſtrange fignre let them paſs, but ſpoke not; and as they entered an high bricked hall, roofed with ſome kind of black wood, he barred the door behind them, and then ſtalked after them.

The man with the lantern, which reflected a dim and lurid light on the melancholy manſion, moved ſlowly out of the hall, and entered a long paſſage Overcome with terror, Eupheme now claſped her mother's arm, and faintly articulated, "Good God! whither are we going?" "Have patience, have courage, my child," anſwered her mother, ſtill endeavouring to lead her on; but ſhe hung back

back involuntarily, and the man with the lantern diſappeared. A dreary pauſe enſued, and the figure behind cried, in a hollow voice, "Won't you go on?"

They proceeded, hardly knowing how, to the end of this paſſage, and then ſaw a door opening into a very large room, where, at the farther end of it ſtood the old man, ſtill holding in his hand the lantern, which made the darkneſs and deſolation of the apartment appear viſible. He waved his hand that they might approach. They ſlowly advanced towards him; when they were quite cloſe to him, he cried, in a ſharp tone, "It is is five and thirty years ſince a woman has been within the walls of this houſe. I wiſh I may not now repent my fooliſh compaſſion. I can afford you nothing but leave to remain in this room. There has been a fire in it to-day. My own ſecurity obliges me to lock you in. Here is a piece of candle in the lantern. With the dawn of the morning you muſt depart. He then croſſed the room, ſeemed either to lock or unlock a door on one ſide of it, and ſtalked away through

through that at which they had entered, where the other diſmal figure had ſtood centinel during this ſhort conference. Struck with the horror of being thus left in a ſituation which, except they were leſs liable to be frozen to death, appeared to Eupheme worſe than that they had eſcaped from, ſhe threw herſelf into her mother's arms, and burſt into tears.

The neceſſity of exertion had hitherto kept up the ſtrength of Mrs. Widdrington, but now ſhe ſeemed to loſe not only her courage, but her ſenſes. The terror of her daughter redoubled, when ſhe perceived that her mother did not anſwer her, but ſeemed inſenſible to her tears and careſſes. It was now her turn to exert herſelf. She ſeized the lantern, in which the candle was expiring, and examined the room, in hopes of ſhe knew not what, but from a confuſed idea of obtaining ſome aſſiſtance for her mother. A door on one ſide was not locked, though the old man had appeared to lock it. Eupheme opened it; a violent guſt of wind ruſhed into the room, but

was

was all darkneſs beyond: She ventured in, however, a ſtep or two; and, by the dull and wavering light ſhe held, thought ſhe ſaw three or four tall figures, in black, ſtand againſt the oppoſite wall of the high and ſpacious chamber; ſhe even fancied they moved, and terrified, ſhe retreated haſtily, and ſhut the door, which ſhe endeavoured in vain to lock. On approaching her mother, ſhe ſaw her eyes turned with a melancholy look towards the immenſe chimney; and ſhe underſtood, from the ſigns Mrs. Widdrington made, that ſhe ſhould endeavour to revive the few embers that might yet be alive, under the handful of aſhes that remained in the chimney. This then ſhe endeavoured to do, and fortunately found two ſmall pieces of unburnt wood, with which, though green, ſhe at length contrived to make a blaze. She then aſſiſted her mother to approach cloſe to it; rubbed her hands to reſtore their warmth, chaffed her feet, and covered her with her cloak and apron over her own. In a few moments her recollection returned, and ſhe ſpoke; but her eyes were glazed,

and

and her vital powers ſeemed ſtill in a great degree ſuſpended. Eupheme dreaded the extinction of their light, and the failure of their fire. She raiſed the candle as well as ſhe could, and again traverſed the room, though ſtill looking fearfully towards the unlocked door, expecting every moment one of the ſpectres would appear at it, which ſhe fancied ſhe had ſeen in the room beyond it.

Her ſearch now was to find ſomething to feed their fire, on which her mother's exiſtence ſeemed to depend; and ſuch was the diſmantled ſtate of the room, that this was not difficult. The boards of the window-ſeats were rotten, and in broken ſplinters; Eupheme, without ſcruple, took a piece of them, and reſerved others to keep up their fire, which afforded them ſuch a ſupply, that ſhe ſaw the laſt ſinking gleam of the candle with leſs diſmay; and with great difficulty, dragging to the fire a long ſort of ſettee, ſhe perſuaded her mother to lie down upon it, while ſhe knelt before her, ſtill chaffing her hands, and endeavouring to re-animate the

the ſpark of life which fear and extreme cold had ſo nearly extinguiſhed.

Fatigue, aided by the torpor which is always felt on being long expoſed to ſevere cold, now conquered both faintneſs from want of food, and apprehenſion either for her child or herſelf, and Mrs. Widdrington fell into a dozing kind of ſtupor, which Eupheme flattered herſelf was ſleep.

Anxiety, however, and fear leſt the fire ſhould go out, together with dread of the terrific ſhapes that ſhe ſtill thought were in the next room, deterred the trembling girl from attempting to take any repoſe. The wind howled round the deſolate manſion, and every now and then the door, towards which her looks were ſo fearfully directed, ſcrooped on its hinges, and ſhe fancied ſhe ſaw the lock turn.

So paſſed the apparently-longeſt night that ſhe had ever known. Day at length appeared, faintly glimmering through the crevices of the window-ſhutters; and with

with its firſt dawn Eupheme would gladly have left this inhoſpitable abode, but that her mother remained in a ſtate that rendered it hopeleſs to propoſe it to her. She ſeemed wholly exhauſted; hunger, fatigue, and cold had on her the effect of long illneſs, and ſhe endeavoured in vain to move, when Eupheme made her recollect the neceſſity of their immediate departure.

Nothing was now to be done, on the part of Eupheme, but to endeavour to find ſome refreſhment for her mother, which might give her ſtrength to proceed. She propoſed this, and receiving her aſſent, ſhe ventured once more to enter the room where ſhe had ſeen, the night before, ſhapes, which her terrified imagination had magnified into ſpectres, from whence ſhe thought ſhe might find a paſſage to the part of the houſe inhabited by the two old men, who, however, appeared to her to be wraiths and kelpies*, rather than living beings. On her opening the door, ſhe now perceived that the objects of her affright were nothing

* Evil ſpirits ſo called in Scotland.

nothing more than large bundles of vegetables, tied up for the ſeed to dry, and ſome of them wrapped round with pieces of rug and mat: The whole room was covered with things of the ſame nature, and it ſeemed to have been many years ſince it had been inhabited by any other animals than the vermin which theſe things attracted. Eupheme found no door in this great room, but one which opened into a ſort of garden or court, and which had once been glazed, but was now compoſed of old boards nailed in place of ſaſhes. She would have opened one of the windows, in hopes of being able to get out of it, but juſt as ſhe was attempting to lift the ſaſh, a young man appeared in boots, a thick great coat, and a flapped hat, who, with a dejected air, picked his way through the deep ſnow. The noiſe ſhe made at the window ſtartled him ; he looked up, and had he ſeen all the *ghaiſts* which Eupheme had figured to herſelf the night before, he could not have teſtified more ſurpriſe. The ſight of him was much leſs ſo to Eupheme, who, ſuppoſing he belonged to the houſe,

renewed

renewed her efforts to open the window in order to ſpeak to him. He ſaw her deſign, and ſtepping forward, forced up the old ſhattered ſaſh, which ſeemed withinſide to be confined by cobwebs and dirt.

Then, in a voice and manner expreſſive of the greateſt ſurpriſe, he inquired, though very reſpectfully, by what ſtrange accident he ſaw her there. Eupheme related briefly what had befallen them; and he, again expreſſing his wonder, and in ſtill ſtronger terms his concern, told her very haſtily that the old gentleman who, with one ancient domeſtic, inhabited the houſe, was a man of very large fortune, who, in conſequence of ſome diſappointment near forty years before, had taken a diſlike to the world, and particularly to women, not one having ever been ſuffered to enter his houſe ſince; that he had fallen inſenſibly into the vice of old age, extreme avarice, and, though he was ſuppoſed to have very great ſums of money concealed in the houſe, he denied himſelf the common neceſſaries of life. The young man went on to ſay

that

that he was the nephew of this ſingular perſon, the only ſon of his only ſiſter, whom he had only within the two or three laſt conſented to ſee; but that he never eat or drank in the houſe, and only made an occaſional viſit from a neighbouring town, where he lived with his mother, always expecting to find that his uncle was either murdered for the ſums of money that were ſuppoſed to be hid in the houſe, or had periſhed through his extreme fear of being at the leaſt expence; and that the unuſual rigor of the preceding night had occaſioned him to pay an early viſit of inquiry, becauſe he thought that the old man might very probably have ſuffered himſelf to die of cold rather than allow himſelf a fire.

Such an account gave but little hope to the unfortunate Eupheme, that ſhe ſhould be able to procure, for her mother, the refreſhment that was become ſo requiſite. She related, to the young man, the deplorable ſituation her parent was in, and her own fears. He declared, with great appearance of confuſion, his inability to help

help her ſo immediately as he wiſhed; but ſaid, that to offer the old gentleman, whoſe name was Morſewall, to pay for any thing they might have, would be the only way to engage him to accommodate them; that in the mean time he would haſten to ſee what could be done for them, without appearing, however, to know any thing of what had paſſed, for the leaſt offence given to his uncle would, he ſaid, not only prevent his being of the leaſt uſe to them, but, perhaps, ſhut him out for ever.

My ſtory would run into too great length, were I to relate the particulars of the following ſcenes. For three days, Mrs. Widdrington remained in a ſtate which rendered her removal impoſſible; but, contrary to all expectation, Mr. Morſewall ſuffered her to have a bed in his houſe, ſuch as it was, and even a little fire. His nephew procured them, by means of a labourer he employed, ſome wine and other neceſſaries, which the houſe did not afford: He got their chaiſe refitted; and as ſoon as the unhappy Mrs. Widdrington was able to move, ſaw her carefully conveyed to the town

where his mother lived, and where, in ſome days more, ſhe ſo far recovered by the kindneſs of theſe ſtrangers, and the tender aſſiduity of her daughter, that ſhe was enabled once more to renew her mournful journey.

I will not enter into a detail of the ſufferings of the mother and daughter when they reached London, where neither of them had ever been before, and now came to viſit, in priſon, the huſband and the father, who had ſo little merited this cruel deſtiny: Suffice it to tell you, that, from the chicanery of thoſe infamous men who thrive and fatten on the miſeries of others, Mr. Widdrington would probably have died in confinement, if the nephew of old Morſewall had not ſuddenly appeared there. Introducing himſelf as the old acquaintance of Mrs. Widdrington, who warmly acknowledged the obligations ſhe owed to him, he deſired to ſpeak with her huſband in private, when he told him, that his uncle was lately dead, having literally ſtarved himſelf to death; that he immediately came into the undiſputed poſſeſſion of wealth, much greater than his moſt ſanguine ideas had taught

taught him to ſuppoſe; and that the filial affection, beauty, and innocence of Miſs Widdrington had made ſuch an impreſſion upon him, when ſhe had been reduced to the neceſſity of taking a temporary aſylum at Mr. Morſewall's, that he had no ſooner paid the laſt duties to his uncle and ſecured, the ſums in ſpecie, as well as the ſecurities he had left him, than he haſtened to lay the whole at her feet; and he truſted, not only that ſhe would not reject him, but that ſhe would ſuffer him to make the beſt uſe of his fortune, by releaſing her father.

A very few days now ſerved, with the aſſiſtance of a lawyer employed by Mr. Weſtcombe, (for ſo the young lover was called) to ſettle all the affairs of Mr. Widdrington, in a much better way than he expected. The marriage-ceremony between Mr. Weſtcombe and Eupheme was no ſooner over, than they ſet out for Scotland, where, in a few months afterwards, Charles Widdrington returned, cured of his ambition, and anxious only to make amends to his father for all he had ſuffered on his account, by aſſiſting him in his farm,

farm, which ſoon flouriſhed more than before his misfortunes. Mr. and Mrs. Weſtcombe fitted up an houſe in the pleaſanteſt part of Yorkſhire, to which he had ſucceeded, among many other eſtates: and the night that threatened to be the laſt of hers and her mother's life, is now thought of with gratitude to that Providence which thus brought good out of evil, and from apparent misfortune produced long and unuſual felicity.

Remarks on this little narrative cloſed the evening.

THE END.